Colonel General Alfred Jodl, Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command and one of Hitler's closest military associates, was sentenced to death by hanging at the Nuremberg Trials in 1946 and executed. The main reason for his conviction was his transmission of Hitler's order to execute Red Army commissars and so-called Allied commando units upon capture.
Jodl, who had held the position of Chief of the OKW General Staff since August 1939, signed Germany's unconditional surrender on May 7, 1945.
Mrs. Luise Jodl, the colonel general's second wife, had previously been chief secretary to leading German generals such as Halder and Beck and to the "commissioners" in Mussolini's government. Her circle of friends, as well as that of the Generaloberst, included men who took part in the July 20 conspiracy against Hitler. Conversations with Jodl, his diaries, and a wealth of eyewitness accounts show the developments within the German Wehrmacht before and during World War II until the bitter end. Mrs. Jodl describes the Colonel General's position toward Hitler, the situation of the generals and the Wehrmacht leadership, and the futile attempts by Jodl and other officers to oppose Hitler.

The author
Luise Katharina Jodl, born Luise von Benda on September 10, 1905, in Rubkow, Pomerania, spent her school and high school years in Potsdam and Berlin. In 1926, she joined the Reichswehr Ministry, soon became secretary to the Chief of the Troop Office (General Staff), and also worked for General Beck throughout his entire term of office. In 1941, she was transferred to Rome, and in 1943 to Mussolini's headquarters on Lake Garda. Returning to Berlin in October 1944, she worked for the Red Cross, married Colonel General Jodl in early 1945, and fled to Berchtesgaden in April. She was involved in the Nuremberg trials as an assistant to the defense.
From 1948 onwards, she worked at the Institute for International Law at the University of Munich, where she still lives today.

Luise Jodl
BEYOND THE END
Life and Death
of Colonel General Alfred Jodl
With 26 illustrations
MTV • MOLDEN-TASCHENBUCH-VERLAG
VIENNA-MUNICH
All illustrations, including the dust jacket photo, are from the author's private collection, with the exception of the two photographs on page 147 above (Beck and Halder), which were provided by the Institute of Contemporary History at the University of Vienna.
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"What you considered to be the purpose of your journey is nothing but the shell, the outer shell of being, from which the goal only emerges when it is reached. If at all. Either you had no goal, or the goal is beyond the end you foresaw and is transformed into fulfillment."
T. S. Eliot, "Four Quartets"

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This attempt at a description was written about 30 years ago, while the events were still fresh in the mind, and has been left in its original form for the sake of authenticity. Only the footnotes and a few additions reflect current knowledge. It goes without saying that today's perspective is in many ways different.

This publication is intended to help clarify a fateful entanglement and to point out the dangers of a totalitarian regime, which were recognized in time by relatively few people.

Three times the cuckoo calls

"There are days when an infinite distance is covered. When the mind later recalls the images, it thinks that a year would hardly have been enough to contain them, but it was only one day, a single day, that revealed everything."
Gerd Gaiser, "Die sterbende Jagd" (The Dying Hunt)

Berlin, April 1945. The inhabitants of this city, whose name has become a symbol, will never be able to forget those days. Was it reality? The dome of a cloudless, light blue sky, green veils over copper-colored branches, and the first crocuses amid the long shadows on the grass? Or was it reality, which our anxious hearts simply did not want to believe: that the Red Army was at the gates of Berlin and only days and hours separated the beloved city from unimaginable horror?

Fear silenced the people. Wordless and as if through a glass wall, they looked at each other, the silent question in their eyes: Wasn't this all just a terrible dream? At times, amid the wailing of the sirens, the dull thunder of the Allied bomber fleets, and the distant rumbling of Russian artillery, I thought I heard a strange sound, inaudible and yet drowning out everything else: a pleading incantation not to forget anything, a silent cry for what might be irretrievably lost.

The music on the radio stopped. Instead, there was a ticking sound and then the cuckoo call—an early warning of an air raid. And now the wailing up and down of the siren—full alarm! I laboriously got up from the sofa and tried to collect my thoughts while mechanically folding up the blanket. A glance at the clock: 28 minutes past the hour. So I had fallen asleep after returning home from my shift at the Red Cross, despite all the tormenting images evoked by the daily flood of inquiries to the tracing service

: "Can you tell us whether my wife was rescued when the 'Gustloff' sank?"* . . . "My husband was last with the Volkssturm in Breslau" . . . "My child is said to have left Stolp with the last trek" . . . And so it went, day after day, bundle after bundle, basket after basket, and only rarely the opportunity to really help. Otherwise, just words, words of comfort on a printed form.

Now the doorbell rang, and our little terrier began to bark like crazy. I quickly ran down the stairs and opened the door. Our neighbor stood breathlessly at the door and asked for her soup pot, which was on our stove. We had electricity because the alternate headquarters of the Wehrmacht High Command in Dahlem had its own generator; for most Berliners at that time, electricity was only available during air raid alerts. That had been enough to make soup as long as the Allies were on the Rhine. Now that the front was getting closer and closer, the short approach time meant that the soup could no longer be brought to a boil.

The anti-aircraft battery on the edge of the Grunewald forest began to fire. I quickly grabbed my emergency bag, opened the windows so they wouldn't be shattered by the air pressure from the bombs, and ran to the air-raid shelter, Putzi barking behind me. The other residents of our house, two families who had been bombed out, had already fled. So I was glad to have the dog with me. †The basement phone rang, and I picked up the receiver. "Just a few mosquitoes for now," came my husband's calm voice from the nearby barracks. "I think I can come soon. Prepare dinner for two; I'm bringing a guest."

When I saw Alfred and the mountain infantry general coming across the lawn at dusk, I noticed that they had the gait so typical of mountaineers, cautious and light at the same time. They stopped at the front door, and I listened from the hallway window. "If we hadn't spent weeks preparing for the division's retreat, Colonel General, it would have been a disaster." "I literally had to wrestle the retreat order from the Führer," I heard Alfred reply. "You know how he thinks: hold at all costs."

," I heard Alfred reply. "You know how he thinks: hold at all costs."

In the light of the anti-aircraft searchlights, I saw the two of them go inside, climb the steep, narrow stairs, and take off their coats and caps. I brought the food into the living room—actually, it no longer deserved that name. Except for a round table, a few chairs, Alfred's desk, and a bookshelf, all the furniture had been moved to the air-raid shelter. After dinner, I suggested to Alfred that he take a walk through the Grunewald with his former student. I thought it would do him good to talk things over with an old friend. When they returned about an hour later, the phone rang shortly afterwards: Alfred was to come to the Reich Chancellery to see the Führer. I was glad to have the opportunity to ask my guest a question: "Has my husband said anything about how he thinks things will end here?" The general shook his head. "Not a word. It seems to me that the colonel general has become even more secretive since August, when I last saw him." "Everyone says that," I had to agree with him, "his Air Force

General Staff officer said recently that it was hard to watch him bottle everything up inside." So Alfred hadn't even been able to talk to his comrade and friend. And I myself didn't want to ask; he couldn't know what was coming. Why put unnecessary strain on him? Anyone who knew Alfred, really knew him, knew what was hidden behind this mask of composure: despair over the agony of our country, years of lonely responsibility, complete exhaustion from the futility of all his efforts, and the knowledge—and this was the worst—of the senselessness of the deaths of millions.

We went to the front door and waited for the general's official car. "We talked about the old days," he said, "about mountain trips on the Großglockner and skiing together. Now it seems very strange to me that we were able to talk about that." In the east, the searchlights flared up again, their beams scanning the black night sky. "And I reminded the colonel general of something else," came the voice from the darkness. "That when the Führer took office, he spontaneously said to me, 'I fear this will lead to the next war.'" "Yes," I said, "and now, just because Alfred was one of Hitler's closest aides, the world will always hold him responsible for this

war and its outcome." "The tragedy of your husband is that fate placed him in a position with unsolvable tasks," came the quiet reply. At that moment, the siren began to wail again—preliminary alarm. With its headlights dimmed, the car rolled up, and we parted without a word. The siren blared again—full alarm, the anti-aircraft guns began to fire.

Three days later, on April 19, 1945. We were sitting down to dinner when the phone rang. Alfred went to the desk and picked up the receiver. I saw his face tense up. "Yes, my Führer!" "I have to go to the situation room right away," he said to me and grabbed his briefcase. "Is there a particular reason why the briefing is so early today?" I asked. The Russians were at Küstrin, so a decision had to be made soon about what to do. Alfred looked at me; he knew without words how I felt. "The lower floor looks like a mess. After all, the Russians shouldn't find a German officer's house looking like Augean stables. Why don't you take care of it a little?" As he left, he turned around on the stairs and said with a quiet smile, "Don't scold me. I think it will do you good."

"It really does me good, such nonsense," I thought as I swept up scraps of paper and shards of glass. But it was all completely pointless; in a few days, everything would be looted, and we would no longer be alive. It was just a shame about the beautiful old things! Wasn't that the siren? I quickly ran upstairs and turned on the radio. "Strong British bomber formations approaching the Reich capital." In the basement, I waited for the announcement of the grid coordinates for the anti-aircraft guns. At "Caesar-Otto-3, Dora-Friedrich-4," the bombers would fly over the city center. But this time, completely different numbers came up. Where could they be now? Over Potsdam, where my parents lived? Or Zossen, where the army headquarters was? When I went outside into the damp, dark night after the all-clear, it smelled of smoke, and the western horizon was ablaze with orange flames. Slowly, it turned into a dark red glow, and I felt very miserable.

When my husband returned after midnight from the situation briefing with Hitler, he simply said in response to my questioning look:

* Situation briefing at the Führer's headquarters.

"Potsdam." He lit a cigarette. "I know, my dear, that you have to check on our parents now. You have to! But please understand that I simply cannot give you my official car for that. I cannot and must not offer you advantages that my staff do not have either." I understood him only too well and watched as he calmly unpacked his briefcase to continue working. "I'll just borrow a bike," I said, "it's safer anyway because of the low-flying aircraft."

There was a squeak and a scratch at the door, and I opened it to let the little terrier in. With one leap she was in the room, and with the second she was on Alfred's lap. "Putzi" was a little Italian dog who had been taken by plane from Rome during the evacuation and brought to Mussolini's government headquarters on Lake Garda, along with five little puppies. I had been working there at the time and chose the smallest of them: not quite genuine, black and white, and very affectionate. Now she sat there, her eyes shining, following her master's every move as he took the box of cookies he had saved

especially for her out of the drawer. This was Putzi's hour, as well as ours, the only quiet hour of the day that belonged to us. I was happy to see my husband's face relax as he fed the dog. His face still showed red spots, which were typical signs of anger for him. Now there was an almost thoughtful calmness about his features. "The Führer was raging again today because the runways for the turbo fighters have been destroyed again. But how can they be repaired in one night, with more than 250 bomb craters in them? Such madness!" Alfred stood up, put the dog on the carpet, and began to pace up and down the room with his hands in the pockets of his riding breeches. "It seems," I heard him say in his deep voice, "that the Führer has now made his decision." I felt my heart pounding in my throat. "He obviously wants to retreat with a small staff, whether north or south is still uncertain and will be decided tomorrow." After a pause: "I want us to stay together as long as possible." That took the burden of deciding who to stay with, him or my parents in Potsdam, off my shoulders for a day.

Early the next morning, I requested leave from my workplace, the Red Cross Regional Office III in Grunewald, borrowed a bicycle, and began cycling to Potsdam. As

I pushed my bike up the Wannseeberg, I saw thick black clouds of smoke billowing. I crossed the Ghenicker Bridge as fast as I could, my fear for my parents almost taking my breath away. The park paths of the New Garden were littered with splinters, but the tires held up. The Marble Palace was still standing, and now—thank God in heaven!—our house on Birkenstraße was intact except for the roof and windows. Breathless, I put down my bike and rang the bell, rang it again and again. I heard footsteps, the key in the lock, saw the door open, saw my mother's face. The horrors of the night had left their mark on her familiar, loving face, as if carved with a stylus. The horror was still in her eyes. "At first we couldn't believe it, now that the war is over. Everything is supposed to be gone, the Garrison Church, the town hall, the . . ." Tears choked her voice.

I had hardly ever seen my mother cry, and now that everything around her was collapsing, was I supposed to leave her and my father? I unpacked my backpack. I had brought whatever food we still had at home and watched with shame as these two beloved old people rejoiced. Would I be able to bring myself to leave them? When we said goodbye and talked about "next time," we all knew we were trying to push the truth away. And then my mother, my good, understanding mother, said, "Say hello to Alfred. You two belong together now. God bless you both." "God bless you, we'll see each other again!" I heard myself calling these words over and over again, dazed with pain and shame, as I cycled around the lawn in front of the house. Distant and lost, the figures of my parents stood in the window frame without glass. There was a small bang; the front tire had burst, cut by shards of glass. Now I had to get home somehow; there was no other option. Without looking back, I ran away, pushing my bike in front of me, through the New Garden, almost grateful for the occasional push of the pedal because it numbed the shame and the raging pain inside. In Wannsee, a Volkssturm soldier offered me a ride in his truck. We lifted the bike up, and that's how I got to Zehlendorf. At the Red Cross office, there were new baskets with inquiries about missing persons. Was my mother still crying?

Fatigue and apathy—no more than two to three hours of sleep per night—became so great that my dazed mind

registered the daily events almost mechanically. We watched the heavy bombing raid on Hitler's birthday from the garden; Dahlem was spared this time. When Alfred returned from the Reich Chancellery after the midday briefing, he was very quiet at first. I knew this state – just don't ask. Suddenly he took me by the shoulders, looked at me, his eyes very calm. "Do you know what the Führer said today? 'I will fight as long as a loyal follower still fights beside me, and when the last one has left me, I will shoot myself.'" I remained silent, but he understood my question. "Pack a small suitcase with the essentials for tomorrow, and get leave from the Red Cross today." Could I take responsibility for abandoning my post and my parents? Alfred read the concerns on my face. Impatient, but understanding, he said, "Don't think that after the Russians march in, you'll be free for more than half an hour; who do you think you'll be useful to in the Lubyanka?"‡ (The wife of Grand Admiral Raeder was indeed taken to the Lubyanka immediately.) I saw his point, but it was hard for me to go to

my superior. Professor Brekenfeld, head of Department III, looked at me thoughtfully as he wrote out the note. Then he went to the window. "What was that about the wonder weapons? I believed in them." I left without saying a word, but we shook hands. If I had known then that the office would be dissolved the next day, everything would have been easier.

That night, the cuckoo sounded its warning call three times on the radio. For the first time, Russian planes flew over the Reich capital after the attacks by British and American bombers. Alfred returned from the Reich Chancellery early in the morning. We went into the garden, where the anti-aircraft guns at the air defense command were firing at full blast. The searchlights danced across the blue-black night sky, now forming a beam of light, a tiny silver mosquito fluttering in its grip. "Three times the cuckoo calls," I said to myself, "not a good omen for us." Despite the incessant firing of the 8.8 anti-aircraft guns, Alfred had heard me. "For us?" he repeated. His voice came out of the darkness muffled and barely intelligible. "What significance does our fate still have? This is the end of Germany!"

Early in the morning, a call came from Field Marshal Keitel: a Ju 52 would be taking off for the south in the afternoon to fly out some officers from the OKW; Mrs. Keitel and I should join them. Everything in me resisted this suggestion. "If we can't stay together, I'll go back to the Red Cross or to my parents in Potsdam." "I can promise you almost with certainty that I will follow you in two days at the latest," Alfred reassured me. "Do it for my sake!" I felt the events overwhelming me, pulling me along as if in a maelstrom. Alfred had put on his cap. "I have to go to the situation now," he said quietly. I took in his face, the familiar face of this person who was so familiar to me, one last time: the deep furrows of fatigue, the long, straight nose, the lips that had been pressed tightly together in recent months and now suddenly appeared soft and young; his whole figure, taut and controlled as always. His very bright blue eyes full of trust and love, he took my face between his large, warm hands: "We'll see each other again."

I accompanied him down the stairs to the front door and listened to the grinding of the wheels. When I returned to the living room, I saw a letter in Alfred's handwriting on his desk. I tore open the envelope. Was this a farewell?

"Dying is easy, staying behind is hard. Death has called me. Life has given me more happiness than most people, it gave me a wife in my younger years like few others, and it gave me you, to grow in love with her and me for the task that no one else could have fulfilled as you did . . ."

I tried to understand, to take in the meaning of these words; it was impossible for me. The phone rang. It was Alfred, calling me from the Reich Chancellery. "Your letter!" I managed to say with difficulty. "If you're not coming, please let me stay here." "I beg you, go! I promised you: we will see each other again. I can't say any more on the phone now. But I had to speak to you one more time, to thank you once more!" The phone crackled, the voice was gone.

I felt and knew that it would help him if I left Berlin. With a man of his character and his way of thinking, it could not and should not be otherwise. Even now, as the fate of his country was being sealed, at this very moment, everything had to

step back when it came to his personal life. And if I was honest, could I myself still believe in the permanence of our happiness together during those surreal days? Certainly not with reason. But unconsciously, I had clung to a hope, to the swaying reed of hope for a future, even if it was completely unimaginable. Where, how, when—none of that mattered. Only that should exist, our lives together, the devotion through enchantment, as Ortega y Gasset understands love, should still find its fulfillment. Every line of my hastily scribbled reply was nonsensical; only one thing seemed important to me: not to let him, now, at the last minute, lose faith in everything that had been his task and goal. I put the letter in Alfred's suitcase along with "Jodlchen," a little doll with long hair that Jodls had given me during a long illness, and photographs of Irma, his first wife, and me.

The doorbell rang; my cousin, Margaret Böhlau, had arrived. As I tried to force down some food, I told her about our conversation the night before. It had been about voluntarily ending one's life. Alfred had

firmly and clearly rejected the idea. "I would consider it irresponsible if we, as leaders, were to slip away and leave others to take responsibility for this chaos."
The doorbell rang; Keitel's adjutant, Major von Szymonski, had come to pick me up. I picked up Putzi, grabbed my suitcase, and put everything down again to hug my cousin. "This can't be true!" we both said at the same time.
"It's true, it's true," hammered in my ears as my bus took me through the shattered streets of Berlin to the airport. The jumble of emotions, grief for Alfred, my parents, shame about fleeing, relief at escaping the Russians, all gave way to a strange apathy. The terrier climbed out of his bag and pushed against the window. Through the rain-wet windows, I saw treks with emaciated horses, people with suitcases hurrying between smoke and rubble. I may have cried, I don't remember.
The moment we left the bus, a shrill whistle pierced the sky, then a detonation shook the air, jets of flame shot up from the end of the airfield, then thick black smoke rose. Apparently, a aircraft had been hit by Russian artillery. The bus passengers hurriedly crowded into the Ju 52, which was already waiting with its propellers running. Staggering and sluggish due to its excess weight, it lifted off the ground. I tried to take in one last image of Berlin, but the ghostly tangle of ruins made it impossible to get my bearings. "Put on your parachutes!" ordered Major von Szymonski. The hooks clicked into place, the sturdy straps felt like protection. I stuffed the contents of my handbag into my coat pockets so that I would have my hands free for the dog if necessary. Putzi was obviously as reluctant to jump as I was. She kept her eyes closed as the plane began to buck, and I could feel her little heart beating fearfully against her ribs. "Just like me," I thought; she was part of Alfred and me.
Around the plane was a gray nothingness. Below us, Russian armies marched through German territory. When would they be in Berlin, when in Potsdam? Would Alfred leave Berlin tomorrow, would he still be alive? The engine roared steadily, rain ran down the curved surface of the wings in small rivulets. A trail of oil followed the same path, but the rain ran faster. What would happen to Alfred? And why, why had all this, this end, and above all this unfortunate war, had to happen at all? The engine roared, rain and oil continued to run and disappeared into nothingness.
I leaned my head against the window pane and closed my eyes. And then everything passed before me once more—the war and Alfred Jodl's path, as I had experienced it during the war.

THE WAR

1.

Field post number 10222

"Nothing as clear as anger or retribution . . . something that rose from the waters, a monster from the depths, with a blind face and a lashing tail."
Evelyn Waugh, "Brideshead Revisited"
An early autumn morning in Berlin's Tiergarten, August 25, 1939. The squirrel stared at me with its expressionless oval eyes, clinging to the beech trunk with careless confidence. It was so quiet that I thought I could hear the faint rustling as it slid down to fetch its piece of sugar. The horse snorted softly, threw its head up, and sniffed the colorful leaves. I watched the squirrel, supported by its bushy tail, grasp the sugar cube with its little paws and nibble it hastily. "This is peace," I said to myself in a low voice. And tomorrow war? War! Even the most vivid imagination could not conceive of the full meaning of this word, especially since my childhood memories of the First World War were now only vague. So, alongside the immense tension, fear, and horror mixed with curiosity, the question kept popping up in my mind: "Can one man's will really set the world on fire, or is an unknown world spirit using this figure to bring an era to an end?"
Much later, I read what General de Gaulle thought about this: "The conflict that has now begun could well prove to be the longest, most comprehensive, and most violent that has ever afflicted the earth. The roots of this conflict lie in the political, economic, social, and moral crisis of the present. This crisis is so deep and widespread that it will ultimately lead, with fateful force, to a total upheaval of the current significance of individual nations, as well as their structure and balance of power."

I rode on slowly. My thoughts wandered back. More than once, as secretary to the Chief of Staff, I had already witnessed the fear of war or, as in the Sudeten crisis, the threat of war looming on the horizon. And each time, the specter had crept away. But what had happened in 1936, at the closing ceremony of the Olympics? When the flags of the nations were lowered in the dome of light cast by the spotlights, I was shaken by a sense of foreboding that the young people on the lawn in front of me would never again measure their strength in peaceful competition, but would bleed to death in battle on the fields of war. The pride and enthusiasm of those days had caused the premonition to sink back into the depths of my unconscious, but today—three years later—I found it confirmed.

The shrill cry of a bird sounded from the nearby Zoological Garden. When I had been there with my parents a week earlier, I had envied the penguins as they stood on the edge of the pool with solemn calm and confidence. "See you next Sunday," I had called after my parents as they took the train to Potsdam. Thank God they had no idea that the mobilization boxes were ready at the War Ministry.

How difficult it was to make sense of it all, especially since there was not enough information to understand the developments of the last few hectic weeks. Certainly, one could glean some information from newspapers, from the Neue Zürcher Zeitung and the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, but then the reports from German military attachés abroad and the intercepted reports from foreign military attachés in Berlin, which Admiral Canaris, the head of the Abwehr, sent to the General Staff, sounded quite different. And probably the idealized image that people carried within themselves was too strong to be suppressed. "A belief is not acquired through objective considerations," writes Arthur Koestler in his book The God That Failed. But what happens to this belief when it is shaken by objective considerations? The past year had been a severe test of my confidence in a regime that had regained our country's place among the great powers, given the people work, and abolished class differences and party squabbles. These doubts began in the spring of 1938 with the dismissal of Colonel General Baron von Fritsch, commander-in-chief of the army, under circumstances that were, as gradually became apparent, most undignified.

the tense atmosphere, Hitler's order to march into Austria came. Presumably a diversionary tactic to counter the palpable rebellion among the officer corps in the wake of a major foreign policy success.1 And when a shower of flowers had been thrown at the invading German Wehrmacht, hadn't sharp critics of the regime also returned from Vienna shaking their heads? Then, move by move, the Czech crisis had developed, and once again my own knowledge was not sufficient to clearly recognize the connections. Then came the most powerful shock of all: the resignation of my immediate superior, Chief of Staff Ludwig Beck. I knew that this was also a crossroads of decision for me. Once again, the ideal image was stronger, and Jodl's words, "In every revolution, evil is swept to the top, and the good and strong elements must ensure its disappearance," appeased my doubts. And the Munich Conference and the behavior of the Western powers did their part to mend the cracks of this doubt. "There is no more effective means of dulling the voice of conscience than to devote oneself selflessly and wholeheartedly to one's work," wrote Arthur Koestler before renouncing communism. So I stifled my revulsion and shock at the looting of Jewish shops on Kristallnacht with work, just as I did with the warning voices during the invasion of Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1939.

And now – war. The day before yesterday, on August 23, 1939, my Bavarian friends, Major General Alfred Jodl and his wife Irma, arrived from Vienna. Alfred was stationed in Brno as an artillery commander in 1944. We met in silence. A glance at Alfred's deeply serious face confirmed my fears. "At noon today, Keitel briefed me on my mobilization assignment as head of the Wehrmacht Command Office in the OKW§ ," Alfred said in a low voice. "I don't need to tell you what this is about." "Don't you think the Führer is bluffing again?" I asked. Alfred shrugged. "It seems to me, and I fear, that this time it's serious. I still don't know enough. But that's a matter for the politicians, thank God, and not for us soldiers. Only one thing is certain: once we board this ship

, there's no getting off." Irma Jodl had tears in her eyes. "If we had known, we wouldn't have moved to Vienna last fall." She took tickets out of her handbag, tickets for a trip to the Mediterranean. "We were

supposed to leave in September, our first trip abroad. And what will happen now, what am I supposed to do alone in Vienna?" She looked very pale and kept staring at her husband with wide, frightened eyes. As we moved apart, Alfred said quietly to me, "If you can, take care of Irma. I won't have much time for that now. But I'm afraid you won't be much better off."

That was the day before yesterday. And yesterday evening, an order came from the central department of the General Staff for me to report for duty with a suitcase and the most necessary travel essentials. So early this morning, I had to visit the place in the Tiergarten once more, which had been a constant source of joy to me during my daily rides. In the middle of the circle of venerable old beech trees stood the "Amazon" — Touaillon's masterpiece — the naked beauty of the bodies of woman and horse tenderly played upon by the pointed shadows of the leaves. Through the dense canopy of the treetops, the sun penetrated in narrow, flashing beams of light, casting shimmering lights on the riding path. I listened to the cooing of the wild pigeons and took it all in once more—the silent power of the old trees, the gentle floating of a falling leaf, the earthy smell of autumn in the air. "This is peace," I repeated to myself, as if I could hold on to this concept, this form of existence. But the peace was now over, gone forever.

An hour later. The cleaning lady was still working in the offices of the Chief of Staff. "So early today?" she said curiously, glancing at my briefcase. The sight of the mobilization boxes reminded me of an episode from the previous year: about an hour before we had learned of the planned conference in Munich, on September 28, 1938, the French military attaché had appeared before General Halder. The same boxes had been ready back then, and the Frenchman had placed his gloves, perhaps not without intention, on one of the large gray boxes with red stripes. At that time, everything had turned out well at the last minute. Would such a miracle happen again?

The day passed quietly, with fewer lectures than usual on the Chief of Staff's agenda. In the afternoon, around 3 p.m., as far as I can remember, General Keitel personally brought the mobilization order to General Halder. Hardly a word was spoken; everyone was busy quickly packing up files and office supplies. There was no time to think about how the short phrase "X-Day = August 26" had set in motion an event that would change the world. There was only anxiety, curiosity, fear, and the pull of uncertainty.

At around 4 p.m., General Halder and his staff left the War Ministry to drive to the "Zeppelin" headquarters near Zossen. Shortly after leaving the town, we stopped at a crossroads, where Major Strewe, commander of the headquarters, reported to the Chief of Staff. The journey took us past barracks to a construction site surrounded by pine trees, where a row of low, gray-painted cement houses stood in a rectangular arrangement, with an air raid tower in the middle.

Because of the sandy soil of the Mark Brandenburg, long wooden planks had been laid out between the concrete barracks. Walking behind Halder and his first adjutant, Major Hauser, I heard the hollow sound of the boards under my feet and suddenly forgot the present. I felt transported back to my childhood, when I had run down such planks to the beach during my vacations on the Baltic Sea. The Zinnowitz beach promenade had everything a child's heart could desire: shell boxes, amber necklaces, colorful balls, and pennants. And then the breathless moment when it lay before me, the sea, glittering, breathing, as if it were just waiting to play with me. I saw myself digging holes in the sand again, which mysteriously filled with water slowly; I felt hard little sand ridges under the soles of my feet as I tried to catch the tiny sticklebacks with my bucket; I ran along the landing stage with my siblings, waving the pennant to greet the returning fishing boats . . .

The sea, pennants, waves? But it was wartime! Cement surrounded me, and the massive armored door of the barracks bore the inscription "A 6." Sergeant Nelson helped me unpack, and the first thing we did was hang the large map of Poland on the wall in the boss's office. Suddenly, the siren wailed. "Just a test alarm so that everyone can familiarize themselves with the air-raid shelters," explained Major Strewe. All the concrete barracks were built deep underground according to their height

depth, and all these underground rooms were connected by tunnels, forming a complete underground headquarters.

We, that is, the two adjutants, the sergeant first class, and I, were still exploring the complicated keyboard of the telephone systems at around 8:30 p.m. when the door flew open. The commander-in-chief of the army, Colonel General von Brauchitsch, his well-cut face as impenetrable as ever, strode quickly into Halder's room. Something extraordinary must have happened. Had a miracle occurred after all? Seconds later, Halder demanded to speak to all department heads, starting with the head of transport, General Gercke. The attack order had been revoked. "So it was a bluff after all," said the second adjutant, von Tarbuk, an Austrian. Only at the very last minute could the troops be stopped, except for one patrol that had already crossed the border at Grabowo. "Let's see someone else try that," Nelson remarked with satisfaction after midnight.

It was not until years later, during the Nuremberg trials, that I learned the details of the events of that memorable August 25 and the days that followed, with the peace efforts of the great powers. At that time, the younger generation at OKH headquarters** knew nothing at all.2 As far as I can remember, we were only generally convinced that the constant tensions on the Polish border and the recovery of the corridor and the lost eastern territories would require military action. Who would have thought at the time that the "attack on the Gleiwitz radio station by Polish insurgents," which was widely reported in the press, was a diversionary tactic by Reichsführer SS Himmler? (3)

Jodl, who had come directly from the troops and was confronted with the fact of the outbreak of war in the OKW, later wrote: "No soldier could know whether such an attack would ever take place, whether this attack would be provoked or unprovoked, a war of aggression or a war of defense, because even a political war of defense could never be waged by Germany, in its central location and always faced with the two-front problem, other than militarily offensively. When the propaganda machine against Poland began to run, when

the deployment was ordered, the leading soldiers were clear about the operational problem, but the political and strategic aspects remained a veiled mystery to them. Was there any serious intention behind the deployment to force Poland to the negotiating table, as had been done with Czechoslovakia in 1938? Did this hope not become a certainty when the attack ordered for the 26th was halted? The general atmosphere I encountered was such that the pact with Russia was considered a sensation and the entry of England and France into the war was considered unlikely. With the exception of Göring, the commanders-in-chief and chiefs of staff knew nothing about the details of the political struggle between the great powers to maintain peace."

"Since this morning, shots have been fired in return." I will never forget the hour on September 1, 1939, when Hitler announced the outbreak of war against Poland to the German people in his strangely sharp, guttural voice. Then came the shock when, on September 3, first England and then France declared war. Rumors circulated that Hitler was deeply affected. "There cannot and will not be a war with the Western powers over the Polish question," he had said to Keitel shortly before, as we later heard. Hitler had underestimated the hatred of the regime. World War II had begun, and no one could overlook which coasts and latitudes this torrential flood would reach.

On the map of Poland, the arrows of the German armies began to advance inexorably, like pincers whose jaws repeatedly enveloped the retreating enemy. The surprisingly rapid and victorious course of the operations and the relatively low losses led to a noticeable easing of the tense atmosphere. The passive behavior of the 110 French divisions, which were opposed by only 20 German divisions on the Siegfried Line, was perceived as a miracle. "Est rien de nouveau" was written above a French caricature brought by Colonel von Tippelskirch, head of the Foreign Armies West department, to General Halder: German and French soldiers were fishing peacefully on both sides of the Rhine. A French veteran, with holes and cobwebs in his beard, lectured a young recruit: "Celä a commence du temps de mon grandpere, mais on ne sait pas pourquoi."

This "pourquoi" had tormented me before the war began,

it was now suppressed. Now that the war was underway, we were faced with the necessity of winning it, and I believe I can say that few at headquarters held a different opinion. The idea of contributing to this effort formed a unifying bond. We were Field Post Number 10222, the staff of the Chief of the General Staff, headed by General of the Artillery Halder. At 8 o'clock sharp every morning, Halder sat at his desk in barrack "A 6," receiving the unending stream of reports, and then presenting them himself every day to the Chief of Staff, Generalleutnant von Hindenburg (††), and sometimes also to the Supreme Commander, Hitler. He could almost only use the night hours for his own work, so that he rarely finished work before 1 a.m. Halder, the first Chief of the General Staff of Bavarian origin, was an enthusiastic horseman. Short-cropped gray-brown hair, brown eyes behind pince-nez glasses, and sharp wrinkles from nose to chin gave his face the appearance of a scholar rather than a typical soldier. I respected and admired his sense of duty, his sense of justice, and his outward composure despite all the tensions with the Führer's headquarters that were already apparent at the time. I was never able to feel the same level of admiration for him that I had for his predecessor, Colonel General Ludwig Beck. At the time, I had no idea that behind Halder's apparent composure, there were serious conflicts between his military oath and his rebellion against Hitler. Halder's first adjutant, Major i. G. Hauser, was an intelligent, humorous Württemberger with whom I often argued about comparisons of values and culture between north and south. Our "Ostmärker," Captain von Tarbuk, managed to dance a Krakowiak on the map table after a victory report without leaving a scratch with his spurs. Sergeant First Class Nelson, a strong and calm man from Mecklenburg, felt as much a part of our staff as the drivers and I did. Each of us was proud to belong to field post number 10222.

We female members of "Zeppelin" did not yet have military status at that time. We wore neither uniform nor rank, nor were we subordinate to a female superior. However, I doubt whether the regulations later issued for "staff assistants" were any stricter than the unwritten laws we imposed on ourselves and which still bind us today. They were nothing more than the reflection of an extremely sincere atmosphere that carried and surrounded us.

In my first years at the War Ministry, I had often been troubled by the fact that I had little time for a private life—except for my morning horseback riding; everything else suffered, family, friends, books, the cultural pleasures that Berlin had to offer. Over the years, under the spell of historical events, my work had increasingly become my real life—apart from the most personal aspects. How much more so was this now the case. Detached from the trivialities of everyday life, freed from personal problems and their responsibilities, my thoughts were focused exclusively on the present, on my work. Who would deny that the conscious or unconscious currents of sympathy also added little highlights to everyday life? Incidentally, it was an enormous relief to finally be able to talk about many things that had previously weighed on me like a nightmare due to the duty of confidentiality. Documents with the blue "Chefsache" stamp were still only allowed to be read by officers, but we were often able to take a look at them as well, keeping what we read to ourselves.

Soon, to my surprise, I discovered that the work of a chief of staff during wartime was not significantly different from that in peacetime. I often felt like I was in the control room of a huge signal box, where experienced hands operated the levers to set the course of world events somewhere far away. And so it came to pass that my most powerful experience of the Polish campaign was not so much the events at the front as the death and final journey of one man: Colonel General Werner Freiherr von Fritsch, former commander-in-chief of the army.

The background to this officer's dismissal in 1938 is now known in detail: Himmler had the unwanted guardian of military tradition suspected of violating § 175 by means of a perjured witness, and Fritsch was dismissed. In retrospect, the acceptance of this intrigue must be regarded as the fateful hour of the German officer corps, but the shock of the misalliance of the Minister of War, Field Marshal von Blomberg, had not yet been processed, and knowledge was too limited.

Colonel Alfred Jodl, then head of Department L (National Defense) in the Wehrmacht Office, vividly recorded this crisis surrounding Fritsch in his diary—which was to play a fateful role in the Nuremberg

trials—especially the confusion of the situation. On February 2, 1938, he wrote: "We are still completely in the dark; according to the judgment of Minister of Justice Gürtner, the material appears to be valid." A month later, Jodl saw things more clearly, noting on March 6: "The main hearing has been postponed to March 9, 1938. It must clearly establish the innocence of the commander-in-chief and shed light on the background to the suspicions." Although an admirer of Hitler at the time, Jodl was deeply concerned about party political influences in the Wehrmacht:

"Every crack it contains provides other forces with a welcome opportunity to break into the structure . . . I advise Keitel to be extremely cautious with all personnel changes so that no obvious damage is done for political reasons. We cannot afford to lose our best senior leaders, who are irreplaceable . . . The best thing would be if Beck could decide to stay . . ." That was in 1938.

On September 22, 1939, a deep shock wave went through the Wehrmacht. Army Group C in Poland reported that Colonel General Freiherr von Fritsch had been killed near Warsaw while on patrol at the front. Fritsch had asked to go into the field with Artillery Regiment No. 12, of which he had been made honorary commander. Those close to him had no doubt that he had sought a soldier's death. A final letter to his mother confirmed this assumption.

A state funeral was arranged in Berlin for the former commander-in-chief of the army. Because of my family and friendship ties to the deceased, I was given leave to attend the ceremony. I had once heard von Beck say that Prussia had been buried in 1918. At the funeral service in the great hall of the War Ministry, I felt as if Prussia was being buried today, on this day and with this man. Motionless, full of reverence and shock, the commanders-in-chief of the front and home troops stood in long rows in front of the coffin, on which the steel helmet and medals of the deceased shimmered in the light of hundreds of candles.

Field Bishop Dormann spoke the farewell words. As the trumpeters played the hymn "Father, I call upon you!" from the gallery, I saw tears in the eyes of many a gray-haired general.

The official state ceremony took place on Unter den Linden in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Despite the pouring rain, a huge crowd had gathered. It was my first encounter with the Berliners since the beginning of the war, and I noticed how serious and sombre their faces were. Accompanied by a muffled drum roll, the coffin, covered with the Reich flag, was lifted from the gun carriage and laid out in front of the tomb. Colonel General von Brauchitsch paid tribute to the personality of the deceased: "This hour calls on us to reflect on what enabled this officer to do what he did and achieve what he achieved. What do we find? . . . A man of the purest character, who truly understood his soldiers and was understood by them, with a warm and kind heart. A man who hardly ever needed to speak of duty or unconditional devotion to the cause, because he exemplified it in his own life. Everything that the colonel general demanded of others, he exemplified himself." Brauchitsch concluded with the words: "Just as he remained true to himself in good times and bad, he also remained loyal, unchanging and unshakeable as a rock, to his leader, his people, and his army." It may not have been easy for Brauchitsch to have to take politics into consideration in this farewell speech in memory of Fritsch's once shameful downfall, and it was impossible to ignore how the contrast between the Wehrmacht and the party was expressed even in front of this coffin. On one side stood the representatives of the government, with Göring at the forefront. Hitler himself was absent. When Major General Jodl informed him of the death of the former commander-in-chief with the words, "My Führer, I report that the Wehrmacht has lost its best soldier today," he reacted gruffly. On the other side of the coffin stood the officers of the three branches of the Wehrmacht, the army, air force, and navy. Next to the 80-year-old mother of the fallen colonel general stood 89-year-old Field Marshal von Mackensen, bareheaded with snow-white hair, in a faded hussar uniform. When the rain intensified, he placed his hussar cape around the old woman's shoulders. I have never seen a movement of more tender care. When the representatives of the government, among them Reichsführer SS Himmler, approached to offer their condolences, the old lady did not take any of the outstretched hands, but bowed her head slightly with inimitable dignity and superiority, without looking up. This sovereign composure became

unforgettable to me and stood before my eyes as an example when, seven years later, I said goodbye to my husband, Colonel General Jodl, in the Nuremberg courthouse, where he was handcuffed to an American military policeman.
As the seemingly endless funeral procession moved from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to the Invalidenfriedhof cemetery, I felt as if I could see Fritsch smiling a little mockingly at this grand state funeral, which was so completely at odds with the soldier's death he had sought. His death also affected me personally. As the uncle of my friend Ruth von Werner, who later became my brother Franz's wife, he had often invited us to the Savarin. Then he would watch with a smile through his monocle as we both struggled with such unfamiliar delicacies as oysters and lobster, and offer humorous advice. Lonely by nature and position, he clearly enjoyed bringing joy to young people when they approached him without reserve. I could never quite understand how this true nobleman, of all people, had fallen victim to a vile intrigue. The soldier's death and this final journey were worthy of him.
2.
Operations "Weserübung" and "Gelb"
When, on September 17, 1939, we learned of the secret clause in the German-Soviet border and friendship treaty concluded a month earlier and of the advance of Russian troops, the excitement was tremendous. Even the treaty itself, although it seemed to underpin the strength of our country, had raised concerns in me and many like-minded people. For years, the fight against Bolshevism had seemed to us to be the regime's most important goal. The excitement also concerned the now necessary withdrawal of German troops to the San line. "Ribbentrop is responsible for every drop of German blood shed beyond this line," I heard the head of the operations department, Colonel Heusinger, rant. We learned of the partition of Poland and the establishment of a General Government. Concerns were openly voiced. Now that the Polish state had been wiped off the map, would the Western powers still be willing to make peace? Would they respond to Hitler's appeal for peace on October 6, in which he demanded unrestricted recognition of the conquered eastern territories? A wealth of rumors circulated, rumors of peace, which were only smiled at by skeptics. Whenever we had time, we turned on the radio to listen to special reports. The reports from the "Foreign Armies West" department came thick and fast. England's rejection of peace seemed clear. "The only thing standing in the way of such a peace," declared Prime Minister Chamberlain, "is the German government." Was it
this attitude that prompted Hitler to change his policy? On August 31, 1939, before the start of the Polish campaign, his directive had still been: "In the West, it is important to leave the responsibility for opening hostilities clearly to England and France." The neutrality promised to Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg was to be scrupulously observed. At that time, there was no directive from Hitler for an attack in the West, no operational plan from the General Staff in the Chief of Staff's safe. Then, on October 9, "Directive No. 6" was issued, causing tremendous tension. Admittedly, I had been able to take a quick look at the "Chefsache" (matter for the chief) without permission, of course, in an unnoticed moment, and read: "If it does not become apparent in the near future that England and, under its leadership, France are not willing to end the war, I am determined to act actively and offensively without allowing much time to pass." But how? We may have known more than millions of others, but we knew nothing for certain. We could only speculate and deduce from the extremely tense and nervous atmosphere that there were serious tensions between FHQU (‡‡) and OKH (OKH). However, it became known that Brauchitsch had offered his resignation after a violent clash with Hitler, but then decided to stay. I only learned of the plans of a resistance group to eliminate Hitler in Nuremberg.
I had a week's vacation at New Year and decided on the spur of the moment to go skiing in the Zugspitze massif. But the mountains did not bring the usual feeling of unbridled freedom, because I felt too connected to the daily community of field post number 10222 to be able to enjoy my vacation. On the way through Berlin, I visited the Jodls, who had found accommodation in the OKW's alternative headquarters in Dahlem. "Always causing trouble instead of going along with things!" Jodl grumbled about the OKH. "The Führer certainly thought at first: Stay calm, then the others won't start anything,

as was confirmed in the Polish campaign. But the Western powers have no intention of making peace, that's utopian. And are we supposed to wait until they are stronger?"
The attack on France, originally scheduled for the fall, "Operation Yellow," was repeatedly postponed due to weather and armament
. Nervousness grew. It reached its peak on January 15, 1940, when a German courier plane carrying operational plans accidentally landed on Belgian soil without the pilot being able to burn all the papers. The next day, Hitler's famous "Order No. I" was posted in every office:(4)

1. No one: No office, no officer may learn of a matter that is to be kept secret unless they absolutely must know about it for official reasons.
2. No department and no officer may learn more about a matter that is to be kept secret than is absolutely necessary for the performance of their duties.
3. No department and no officer may learn of a matter that is to be kept secret, or the part of it that is necessary for them, earlier than is absolutely necessary for the performance of their duties.
4. The thoughtless passing on of orders whose secrecy is of crucial importance according to any general distribution key is prohibited.

Everyone complained about this order, which made daily operations extremely difficult. And what no one realized at the time was that it enabled crimes to be committed under the plexiglass cover of silence, crimes that hardly anyone knew about.
So it was that when Operation Weserübung, the landing of German troops in Norway on April 9, 1940, became known, I was speechless. This operation, probably the first of its kind in military history, involving three branches of the Wehrmacht under central command, had been planned by the OKW, and even Göring, commander-in-chief of the Luftwaffe, was only informed after the directive had been signed.
We all followed this operation, which was impressively bold from a military point of view, with great excitement and witnessed the serious crises, the sinking of the cruiser "Blücher" and the destroyers in Narvik, until the victory of the combined mountain infantry and naval troops under the command of General Dietl. We heard that Hitler had lost his nerve during the days of uncertainty and wanted to abort the operation. It was Jodl, at the suggestion of his general staff officer Colonel von Lossberg, who succeeded in persuading Hitler to persevere.
Reports from the "Foreign Armies West" department and the Abwehr indicated that the German landing had preceded that of the British by only a few hours. 6
I later heard Jodl's reasoning for this campaign: "There is no better example of the military necessity of preventive action than this campaign. We did not need Norway and had nothing to fear from it. It brings almost no benefit to the war against England; on the contrary, it ties up almost 300,000 men, and the possibilities for creating naval bases are limited due to a lack of shipyards and docks. But Norway as an English base of operations had to lead to the loss of the war; there were reports of English occupation plans, which were confirmed by the capture of the English reporter Romilly in Narvik and the seizure of English orders. Incidentally, I considered only the extension of the first operation to Drontheim to be responsible. But the Führer insisted on including Narvik in the first landing in order to prevent the British from taking possession of the ore railway."
The order for "Operation Yellow," the campaign in France, had been revoked so often—seventeen times since November 1939—that I didn't believe it at first when, on the evening of May 9, 1940, we were told to "have your suitcases ready!" The special train departed at 6 p.m. Unloading at night—I recognized the sign at the station: "Godesberg." From there, we continued by car toward Schneeifel. It was still dark, but as dawn broke, the fog revealed the eerily magnificent sight of advancing armies. After a few hours, the car turned onto a side road in the dense forest; under a huge camouflage net with tufts of grass, we could see a camp of wooden barracks. We had arrived at the "Felsennest," the new headquarters of the OKH. As I got out of the car, stiff and shivering, I heard a dull roar in the sky: our dive bombers and bomber formations on their way to their first attack. I looked at my watch: 4:30 a.m.

My brother Franz was a long-range reconnaissance pilot and had returned safely from Norway. Where could he be now? In five minutes, the troops would be lining up. I was staying with Brauchitsch's secretary, Miss von Reitzenstein, at the forester's house. I dropped off my suitcase and five minutes later went to the new OKH headquarters, "Felsennest," hidden under camouflage nets. Pinning maps to the wall, testing the telephones, the war continued. Or was it only just beginning?

During those first days of "Operation Yellow," there was as little sleep for Field Post Number 10222 as there was for the troops. "Sleep is completely unimportant in war," said the first adjutant, Major i. G. Nolte, when he once found me asleep, leaning over the desk. "That depends on how long it lasts," I tried to defend myself. "Well, you'll be able to endure it for a few weeks." With the singing of the birds, a daily sign of an unchanged peaceful world of nature, the day began and ended after midnight, when Brauchitsch and Halder, leaning far over the situation maps, dictated the troop movements for the next day into the machine. The many unfamiliar place and river names with French accents often caused headaches. On the afternoon of May 11, the Führer came to the OKH headquarters. I had never seen Hitler up close and was naturally curious. To my disappointment, however, everyone was ordered to remain at their workstations. I found this typically Prussian. But thanks to a staged "coincidence," I did get to see him at close range as he left our barracks. I noticed the incredibly distant expression in his eyes, as if he were seeing right through everything. Major Nolte watched him and shook his head. "Huh, what brutality!" I wanted to know why. He waved me off: "Order No. 1." There we were again: right in the middle of the action and yet without any precise knowledge.

Two days later, Jodl came over from the nearby Führer headquarters in Rondern to speak with Halder. He was elated about the successful landing of the cargo gliders on the Eben Emael fortress: "That was the Führer's idea alone, and it went off with almost no losses." I belatedly congratulated him on his birthday two days earlier. "Who would think of such a thing?" he said dismissively. Then, thoughtfully: "Unfortunately, the crossing at Maastricht cost us a lot of casualties; the bridges had been blown up, which we hadn't expected." As we later learned, the Allies had known the date of the attack. The skeptics who had considered the success of this campaign impossible were proven wrong. Already on May 13, a radio message from General Guderian arrived: "Maas crossing at Sedan forced. Continuing to push toward Laon. So it happened after all." One
day later, the Dutch army surrendered. How could we not be filled with pride at these extraordinary achievements by our troops?

Jodl later told me: "When the Führer said, 'Gentlemen, this will be the greatest victory in world history!' hardly anyone believed him, including me. I was concerned that we were taking a secret route that the god of war would not be able to catch us on." "Why a secret path?" "A direct attack on the Maginot Line would have been pointless," Jodl explained to me. "We would have run the risk of the Western powers advancing deep into our flank through Holland and Belgium into the Ruhr area. The British army was standing by behind the Belgian border, so to speak, with its engines running. (7) That is why the Führer decided to break through at Sedan. Manstein was the first to recognize the greatness and correctness of the Führer's idea." (8)

The euphoria in the "Felsennest" subsided when, on May 24, Hitler's intervention in the planned operations south of Dunkirk allowed almost the entire British Expeditionary Force to escape. Hitler's reasons remain controversial to this day. At the time, I was tasked with transcribing the tape recording of Hitler's telephone conversation with Halder, a problematic task, as the conversation had been conducted with considerable agitation. As far as I can remember, Hitler was concerned about the difficulties that the rear area would cause for the tank units. The counterproposals made by Halder, Brauchitsch, and Jodl were unsuccessful. (9) Claims that Hitler wanted to spare the British the humiliation of having their entire expeditionary force destroyed remain historically unresolved to this day.

While the victory bells rang for three days at home, the OKH headquarters was moved westward again on June 5 to be closer to the front for the next phase of operations. Crossing the emergency bridges at

Maastricht, I was confronted with the reality of war for the first time. What four years later, and even earlier, would become part of everyday life – ruins, shattered bridges, abandoned houses – I perceived at that time, still naive, with horror and shock. We looked silently at the burned-out tanks and trains, and with ever-renewed painful consternation, our gaze remained fixed on wooden crosses with German, Belgian, and English steel helmets. "How strange that the war seems to be confined to the main road," I said to the second adjutant, First Lieutenant von Puttkamer, relieved to see numerous undamaged farms. He nodded. "By the time the harvest is in, the war will be over."

We stopped in Chimay to get our bearings, and I looked at the castle that Napoleon had once given to a friend. As I walked through the well-preserved park, I suddenly realized that being here in a foreign country, on foreign soil, seemed perfectly natural to me. How was that possible? It seemed to me that, detached from normal existence, the improbable had become reality; and I realized that what was questionable did not trigger the doubts that lay encrusted in the subconscious under the challenge of adventure, of the uniquely new. Wasn't this experiencing history, really witnessing it?

The new headquarters were located in Forges, a small Belgian village. For security reasons, the surrounding area had been cleared within a radius of 30 km. The livestock left behind in the rush presented a sight reminiscent of the Garden of Eden when we arrived. Horses, cows, pigs, goats, ducks, rabbits, sheep, chickens, all grazing, pecking or basking in the warm sunshine along the village road. It was an idyllic picture of peace, disturbed only by the anguished mooing of the unmilked cows. A specially deployed milking team relieved them of their distress until their owners came to collect them. Good news awaited us upon arrival: the British had withdrawn from Narvik; Italy's entry into the war was heavily criticized. This was followed by the surrender of Verdun and Paris, and the first rumors of armistice negotiations. When the news of the cessation of hostilities was confirmed on June 22, I was so overwhelmed with happiness that I climbed through a window into the closed church with the sergeant to ring the bells. Shots rang out from the village. The young officers of the operations department fired a salute with a Pak§§ .

The war with France was over, and peace would surely come soon!

3.

Vain hopes

"... and not to hesitate to take the step" Friedrich Schleiermacher

"Peace will come in a few weeks at the latest." These words were heard again and again after the armistice. Halder's letters of thanks for the countless congratulations expressed the same hope: England had already lost the war. This expectation was also reflected in the practical measures taken by the military leadership: of the army's 55 field divisions, 17 were disbanded and 18 were placed on leave. This optimistic mood emanated not least from the Führer's headquarters. In a speech to officers of Army Group C under Field Marshal von Rundstedt in Charleville, Hitler had declared that he expected peace with England in about six weeks and would offer it every assistance in the fight against Bolshevism. When Jodl came over from the Führer's headquarters "Wolf's Lair" to Forges, he made a similar statement: "The English must realize that continuing the war can only harm their world power position and the Empire." Jodl had been present at the armistice negotiations and reported, visibly moved, how Keitel and the French delegate, General Huntzinger, had stood facing each other with tears in their eyes. He also described his own impressions, especially the difficulty of persuading the French to agree to an armistice with Italian General Marras. I was very impressed that they had still behaved very fairly: Marshal Pétain, the new head of government, had been greeted with a guard of honor, and the preamble to the agreement and the concessions granted to the French regarding an army in the unoccupied zone and the free withdrawal of the fleet gave hope for a whole new phase in politics. This hope was also shared at the time by officers who, despite their initial approval, were rather critical of the regime. Four years later, Lieutenant Colonel von Tresckow, one of the leading figures of the resistance, wrote to me on a postcard depicting the signing of the German surrender in 1918 on the train at Compiègne: "Everything here continues to be excellent, and we are approaching our new tasks

with confidence. Any timidity, which I joyfully admit to, has vanished in the face of our tremendous successes. It all depends on mutual relations. Everything will continue to be fine, and hopefully a good peace will follow."

At the end of June, the OKH headquarters was moved to Fontainebleau. On the way there, General Halder had his staff's cars turn off toward Compiegne. Soon we stood at the place where the signing had taken place. The railway carriage, the same one in which Germany had once signed in 1918, had been taken to Berlin. But the empty hall was still visible and, strangely enough, so was the monument with the fallen German eagle. I read the inscription: "Ici . . ."

"Here, on November 11, 1918, the criminal pride of the German Empire succumbed, defeated by the free peoples it had presumed to subjugate."

Versailles and Compiègne! As a child, I had constantly heard adults use the word Versailles, and it had become engraved in my childish mind as a disgrace, as something unimaginably humiliating. This must also have been due to the schoolbooks of the time, because my parents—my mother was English—had an unusually far-sighted and liberal attitude, despite the nationalistic sentiments that were commonplace at the time. But there is no denying that the term "Versailles" had a decisive influence on the feelings and thoughts of the child and maturing young person. Could it be otherwise that now, standing in front of this monument to hatred, I thought with satisfaction that it had now been destroyed! The monuments of hatred had filled me with dismay in Belgium and France alike. Is hatred worthy of a monument?

The journey to Paris took us past Saint-Denis, the burial place of the French kings. Was this supposed to be the much-vaunted Paris? The city was deathly quiet, the shop windows
tightly shut, and police patrols trotted sporadically through the streets. When Halder stopped to ask for directions, they politely provided information. Halder took us on a short tour to see the city's most important historical buildings, and in view of the pure beauty of the architecture, our initial disappointment faded. We continued on to Fontainebleau through the splendor of ancient oak forests. Here, for the first time, we encountered the endless columns of people evacuated from Paris who were now returning there. It was good to know that four German divisions had been specially assigned to care for these unfortunate people. "How grateful we must be that we Germans are spared such a thing," I wrote to my mother, unaware of what we would experience six years later.

Field post number 10222 was quartered this time in a spacious villa on the outskirts of town. What a difference from the musty village house in Forges! I looked with pleasure at the large mirrors, the old oil paintings, and the extensive library. The owners had fled, but the furnishings were still in place. When I wanted to hang up my coat in the room assigned to me—it was like a salon with silk wallpaper and a wide French bed—I was confronted for the first time with the temptation of occupation. The closet was filled to the brim with the most beautiful fur capes—from mink to silver fox—and magnificent bags made of Moroccan leather. Who would notice if a few pieces disappeared into my suitcase as "souvenirs"? Certainly no one but myself. But that was enough, after some hesitation, to lock the devil of temptation firmly in the closet. A new phase began in my daily duties, involving an unprecedented amount of paperwork, mainly reports from the troop units. Instead of the frontline commanders, the military commanders of the various districts were now given priority in the briefings. My hopes of getting more sleep remained an illusion, as did my desire to really get to know Paris. But then one day, the time had come. "You may go to Paris tomorrow with Roeder and the sergeant," Major i. G. Gehlen, now the first adjutant (and later head of the Federal Intelligence Service in Pullach), announced to me.

First Lieutenant Frhr. Roeder v. Diersburg, the second adjutant, was the right companion for Paris. Already wounded four times, he felt miserable at this "stage post" and saw
a visit to Paris a welcome change. When Field Marshal Milch once addressed him as "young blond page," he sent the driver of the car away in revenge, claiming that there was an "air raid alarm." Paris! Was this still the same city as just three weeks ago? It seemed to me that in this short time it had

transformed from a grieving widow into a radiant and vivacious woman. The shops offered everything a woman's heart could desire, but military pay was not enough to afford it. But I couldn't get enough of these fascinating shop windows, which sent my eyes, accustomed to files and secret military matters, into ecstasy. Hummingbird-colored hats on surrealistic stands, polished perfume bottles, bags in all colors, and more perfumes... Most of the museums were still closed, but the Louvre was already open. We searched in vain for the Nike of Samothrace; like the paintings, it had been moved to another location. In the Egyptian section, workers were removing the thick layer of plaster from the mosaic floors. In the Musée Rodin in the magnificent Palais Byron, on the other hand, we found the entire collection of works that Rilke had described in such unique terms.

When we met at the Madeleine at the agreed time, Roeder looked questioningly at a package in my hand. He slapped his forehead when I confessed that they were ski boots. "In Paris!" We decided to spend the rest of our military pay (25 marks every 10 days) at the Ritz. Was it because of the mirrors all around that so many waiters were suddenly serving us? Affably, we accepted the deep bows as we left the dining room and cast a pitying glance at an old, leathery-looking manager who was struggling with his lobster. Roeder couldn't stop talking about how enchanting French women were. "If only I hadn't spent so much time in museums!" he exclaimed, looking back again and again, certain of his own irresistible effect. "Just look at these figures, this chic, quel charme, quel charme!" His intensity of life was so contagious, so affirming of the present, as if he knew that two years later he would be among the millions who had fallen.

On the way back, we stopped to listen to the radio broadcast of Hitler's big speech in the Reichstag. First, he thanked the Wehrmacht: countless promotions were announced. "Now we have the upper hand over the wretched party," said Roeder. Then came the political part. With sharp emphasis, the Führer's voice boomed: "I consider it my duty before my conscience to appeal once again to reason and common sense in Great Britain. I see no reason why this war must be continued." Throughout the entire speech, not a word was said about the restoration of Poland, so could Hitler's appeal find resonance in England? Churchill's response sounded absolutely clear: "We will not stop fighting until freedom is saved." Slowly, the hope for peace faded away.

A new phase began. According to Directive No. 16 of July 16, 1940, preparations for "Operation Sea Lion" – the attack on England – began. Now, Halder's lecture calendar increasingly featured the names of officers from the Kriegsmarine. The atmosphere clearly reflected the strong differences of opinion; in addition, the daily morning reports showed a steady increase in the number of German landing ships sunk by the British Air Force. Even greater was the concern about the daily losses of our Air Force in the air battle that had been raging over the Channel since the beginning of August, fought by both sides with the full commitment of young, convinced patriots.

Jodl later wrote about Hitler's vacillation regarding Operation Sea Lion: "He shared the army's belief that England could be defeated in a short time once a firm foothold had been established on the island. But whether this would succeed depended on nautical imponderables that were foreign to him. Perhaps this strategic decision was the only one in the entire war on which Hitler sought advice. The warning from the commander-in-chief of the Kriegsmarine and an assessment of the situation I had written tipped the scales. Hitler turned his attention to the Mediterranean."

Operation Sea Lion took a back seat and was finally abandoned on October 12, 1940. Instead, the term "Russian campaign" was heard for the first time. First General Marcks, then General Paulus were commissioned to conduct a study of such a campaign. So a two-front war after all? That seemed inconceivable to me. When I was allowed to fly home on one of Halder's planes for a short vacation soon after, in August, I also visited Jodl in Dahlem. When I congratulated Jodl on his promotion to General of the Artillery, without first having been a General Lieutenant, Jodl replied laconically: "I owe that to Göring, who promoted his Chief of Staff Jeschonnek to General of the Air Force. He is much younger than I am."

lieutenant, Jodl replied laconically: "I owe that to Göring, who promoted his Chief of Staff Jeschonnek to General of the Air Force. He is much younger than me, so Schmundt said to the Führer,*** , that the head of his Wehrmacht command staff should have the same rank." Jodl was reserved and taciturn, and I tried in vain to get him to talk about Russia. "These are just theoretical considerations on the part of the Führer, because he suspects something special behind England's unyielding stance. I can tell you more about it later."(10) Duringthose days in August, the first bombs fell on the Reich capital, an event that, in memory of Göring's presumptuous words that he would be called Meier if bombs fell on Berlin, perhaps had a stronger moral impact at that time than the carpet bombing years later. When I returned to Fontainebleau, I learned that Hitler had made good on his warning of retaliation, which he had reserved for August 1, and had ordered unrestricted bombing from September 6 onwards. Every day, we now received large photographs from the Luftwaffe showing the extent of the destruction in the British capital. "No people can endure this for more than eight days," Hitler announced at a meeting of attachés in Berlin. He was mistaken, as British Air Marshal Lord Harris had been before him when he believed that bombs could break the morale of a people. Industry and armaments could be destroyed, but the morale of a people seemed to be strengthened by bombing.

Autumn arrived, bringing with it a series of significant political events: the signing of the Tripartite Pact, Hitler's meeting with Marshal Pétain in Montoire, Italy's completely unexpected invasion of Greece, and finally Hitler's fruitless talks with General Franco in Hendaye. Franco's refusal to allow German troops to march through Spain put a quiet end to the planned "Felix" operation, the conquest of the fortress of Gibraltar.

During those weeks in September, my brother Franz, who was stationed in Orly as the leader of a long-range reconnaissance squadron, came to visit me. General Halder, who was not a hunter himself, offered him the opportunity to shoot pheasants, and I was given leave to accompany him.

It was a perfect autumn day—Indian summer—with

A fine bluish haze over the stubble fields and dew in the cobwebs of Indian summer. My brother had brought dogs with him. They flushed one pheasant after another from the hedges, already trembling with excitement, announcing the game hidden in the bushes. Then the noisy takeoff of this long-feathered, reddish-gold and turquoise-glittering bird—shots and the careful, triumphant retrieval by the setter. "This is different from hunting across the Channel," said my brother as he laid out the route, while the dogs lay around with panting tongues and shining eyes. We sat down at the edge of the ditch, listened to the silence, and tried to forget the war. "What does the victor know about a defeated country," said my brother, "and how much there is to know."

In mid-October, rumors of a return to our homeland intensified. I was granted another leave of absence to Paris and arranged to have dinner with a friend, Lieutenant Colonel von Tresckow, who came over from St. Germain. I had gotten to know Tresckow better in 1938 on a general staff trip when a comrade invited us on a trip to the Moselle and the Odenwald. In Mainz Cathedral, Tresckow had pointed to the Gothic pillars. "That is now to be taken away from us all." I understood him immediately. "A people that allows its faith to be taken away from it deserves no better," was my reply. This conversation and others made us friends, and from then on Tresckow confided his concerns to me more frequently and very frankly. As we got to know each other better, his initial approval of the regime had already begun to change, while I held on to my ideal. But every conversation was a fruitful clarification and enrichment. One of Tresckow's main concerns was the education of young general staff officers: "We are being trained to be machines, always having to conform our opinions. Little consideration is given to individual development."

I had not seen Tresckow since the beginning of the war, and our meeting reinforced my impression that he was an extraordinary personality. Tall and athletic, with a narrow, slightly curved nose and eyes that sometimes seemed almost melancholic, he could appear almost haughty. But only to someone who did not know him and did not know how natural and boyishly exuberant he could be. Despite his innate self-confidence

— he often jokingly referred to himself as the "last Junker" — he was deeply modest and saw his status as an obligation rather than a privilege. He had a deep love for his father's estate in the Mark Brandenburg. His experiences as a very young infantryman in the First World War had, as was probably the case for everyone of his generation, had a formative effect on his consciousness, as had his later years, which had taken him around the world as a merchant and freed him from narrow thinking. He was an ardent patriot and yet the first person from whom I heard the word "European," a term with which I personally had little familiarity at the time. Tresckow was passionate about hunting, and this passion was evident in his quick and observant gaze, even in the psychological realm. Here, he was tempted by a certain exuberance or curiosity to corner his conversation partner with trick questions or to test the authenticity of their reactions. If he ever found himself caught in his own trap, he would reveal his cards with disarming humor. His sense of reality helped him to bring his pronounced idealism, which, combined with a performance-oriented ambition, meant reaching for the stars, back down to earth. This enabled him to express conflicting ideas in the same conversation: "Only the selfless person stands out from the crowd," and then: "A truly great man must also have a few percent of a scoundrel in him."

Tresckow's views on the outcome of the war had changed fundamentally since his positive card after the armistice: "If Churchill succeeds in drawing America into the war, then we will slowly but surely be crushed by their superiority in materials. Then all that will remain of us will be the Electorate of Brandenburg, and I will command its bodyguard." Poor or lucky Tresckow? When he took his own life with a hand grenade after the failed assassination attempt on Hitler on July 21, 1944, he no longer had to witness his beloved Prussia being wiped off the map.

"Have you heard about Blaskowitz's report?" he asked me. I had heard rumors that General Blaskowitz, commander-in-chief in Poland, had submitted a report on crimes committed by SS units to the commander-in-chief of the army for forwarding to Hitler. I didn't know any details—Order No. 1. Tresckow had also only heard rumors, but believed them to be true.

discussing these issues, we walked up the Champs-Elysees to the Arc de Triomphe. Paris showed itself in all its magic, in a brightly colored autumn dress of gold and red. And in the face of all this beauty, something in me resisted thinking about such a sad future for Germany and believing the rumors about Poland.

Tresckow stopped in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and read the text on the gravestone in a low voice: "Ici repose un soldat français mort pour la patrie." The bluish flame flickered in the autumn wind. Tresckow raised his head, deathly pale: "Do you remember the words of Schleiermacher, whose monument I once showed you in Berlin? This is my glory, to know that there will come a place on my path that will devour me, and yet to change nothing about myself when I see it, and not to hesitate to take the step!"

Silence hung between us as he walked me to the car. In the spring of 1944, I received another message from him; I would never see him alive again.

4.

Rome

"The owl cries from temple ruins and cypress trees..." Lord Byron

"Here I am, calm, it seems to me, for the rest of my life. For now, one could say, a new life has begun." With these words, Goethe expressed his feelings upon arriving in Rome. I fear I was devoid of such feelings when, on May 1, 1941, a taxi took me from Termini Station to the "Miltone" guesthouse at Porta Pinciana.

How did I end up here? At the end of April, in view of the impending campaign in Russia, the female employees of the OKH headquarters had been transferred for reasons of space. General Halder knew what this change meant for me after ten years of service in my post in the antechamber of the Chief of the General Staff. He offered me various posts with military attachés abroad. I chose Rome, partly for personal reasons and partly because I expected the work there to be the most interesting. And now I

was actually here in Rome. Was it really only a few hours ago that Halder and the staff had waved goodbye to me in front of A 6 in "Zeppelin"? Had I really only said goodbye to Jodl's family at the Anhalter Bahnhof yesterday evening? "Like a little girl leaving her parents' house for the first time," Jodl had teased me when he saw my face. And now here I was, in a foreign country, in a foreign city, alone, and my Italian language skills were limited to "si" and "no." After living a secluded life at headquarters, I now had to find my way back to normal civilian life in a big city
. With these gloomy thoughts, I sat in the dining room of the guesthouse and poked at something called "frutta del mare." On my way out, I ran into German officers in tropical uniforms, a familiar sight among the many Italians. We got into conversation, and when they heard that I was from OKH headquarters, they asked me about the mood there. "Do they still want to win the war?" asked a first lieutenant, bearer of an old noble name. I was so astonished by this question that I looked at him in complete bewilderment. "Of course." "Well, if you want Hitler to win this war, you're quite the Nazi!" A young captain interjected: "We only have one interest here: to get everything worthwhile out of this damn situation without risking anything. When we're in Africa, we report back here that it's 'Gibli,' which is a sandstorm, and one more day over there brings us a carpet." Now I was seized by blind rage. The question about winning the war had already left me speechless, but this was too much for me. "That's how party bigwigs might think, but not officers!" I left them standing on the stairs and ran to my room. My suitcase was still unpacked. Couldn't I leave here? Stay here, where they wanted to lose the war! Germans, German officers? When I talked to Tresckow in Paris about the outcome of the war, despite all his pessimism, he had only talked about the concern of whether and how the war could be won. But this hatred of the regime, which I encountered here clearly and unambiguously, which even wanted to lose the war, was new to me and left me at a loss. Pensive and desperate, I sat on my bed until late into the night, unable to bring myself to unpack. Then I opened the door to the terrace and went outside. And then everything was forgotten. In the bright moonlight, I saw an old Roman wall in front of me, a park with the broad canopy of pine trees, the pointed cypresses, and above the silver-glittering roofs, the majestic dome of a church. It had to be St. Peter's. Peace and a great silence. After a while, I went back inside and fell into a deep sleep.

On the way to the German embassy—at that time in Villa Wolkonsky, close to the Lateran—the unfamiliar loud bustle of the big city almost overwhelmed me; the heat and cramped conditions in the tram, the "circolare sinistra," were oppressive. What would Goethe have said about this, I thought bitterly, as I stood pressed tightly between
the other passengers. The tram stopped, the driver got out, went to a fountain, and drank leisurely and with pleasure. Singing loudly, he returned to his seat. At first, all this seemed incomprehensible to me, but then his beautiful voice captivated me. In a quiet wave of reluctant joy, I felt how new this world was to me in every respect. Was Goethe right after all?

I reported to General Enno von Rintelen, whom I already knew from attaché meetings and held in high regard. A man of good looks, marked political acumen, and winning charm, he seemed to me particularly suited to his difficult post. Rintelen held two positions: First, he was military attaché at the German embassy in Rome under Ambassador von Mackensen. At the same time, however—undoubtedly the more important position—Rintelen was "German general at the headquarters of the Italian Wehrmacht" (there was a corresponding "Italian general at the headquarters of the German Wehrmacht" in Berlin, General Marras). This position made Rintelen responsible for the liaison between the German OKW and the Italian Comando Supremo, for coordinating the daily Wehrmacht reports, and – until Field Marshal Kesselring was appointed Commander-in-Chief South – for all supplies by sea for Rommel's Afrika Korps in Cyrenaica. While the position of military attaché was more limited to social obligations, the work at the Comando Supremo required the allocation of an entire general staff department, as well as the subordination of the Rome radio station, which relayed all orders to Africa, as the submarine cable had been destroyed.

On May 2, 1941, I curiously entered the embassy garden, shaded by beautiful old palm trees, in the middle of which my new office was housed in a wooden barrack. As soon as I entered, I felt at home: incoming telegrams, radio messages, phone calls, urgent dictations. In short, the aura of an authority closely involved in contemporary history, whose appeal no one who experiences it in historically important eras can resist. "What, you're going to Rome? You lucky thing!" How often had I heard this exclamation at home, but it had always been clear to me that in the midst of a struggle for survival in my own country, the inner
inner peace—the outer peace was more than questionable anyway—to absorb the culture of a foreign country. Not for me, anyway. "Well, what do they think at headquarters about the continuation of the war?" was the first question here, too. I answered as best I could, using the arguments I had heard repeatedly in Halder's staff: that with the occupied territories in hand, a loyal France, and the various alliance agreements, a tolerable outcome to the war was certainly to be hoped for, even if it was not foreseeable. I did not mention the plans against Russia, nor did I mention that the Balkan campaign, which had become necessary due to Yugoslavia's defection, had thrown all the schedules into disarray. "Unfortunately, we see things very differently here," said Major i. G. von G. "We simply cannot understand how continental the thinking is in the OKH and OKW; with that, a war of this magnitude can no longer be won. Far too little importance is attached to the African theater of war." I was happy to accept any criticism, as long as the aim was to win the war. The depressing impression of the previous evening was forgotten.

The first few weeks were very difficult for me. My lack of language skills initially caused me great problems in managing the German-Italian correspondence books, but with the help of the dictionary I soon figured out what a "sommergibile" (submarine) and an "anticarro" (anti-tank gun) were. The heat in the barracks, whose windows always had to be closed for reasons of secrecy, was often unbearable and could only be tolerated with fans. There was almost more work here than in Halder's staff, even if it never went on until midnight. The members of the Afrika Korps who passed through almost daily brought a breath of fresh air with them, we felt we belonged to the "troops" and despised the "military attaché" group a little. The latter, who were better off materially and had enviable cultural knowledge thanks to their long-standing relationships with Italian society, probably looked down on us a little. Every morning, a few diplomats from the embassy came to the barracks to find out about the situation in Africa from the situation map. When German and British units once faced each other in a double encirclement at El Alamein, a diplomat said that this was comparable to a "sandwich." No sooner had the diplomats left the barracks than one of the young officers gave a boisterous parody of this visit, ending with a pathetic
speech by Hitler. So, between the agitation, the heat, and all the seriousness, there was always something to laugh about.

One of my duties soon became shopping in Rome for the "Africans" who received their military pay in lire. As a thank you, I was sent a small turtle from the Afrika Korps one day, which arrived by courier plane. Our draftsman stuck a small command standard on it, and so it rolled through the withered grass in the embassy garden like a small tank until one day it fell victim to a soup lover.

And then, as a reward for "postal services," I received the "EK IH," an award that only a man like Lieutenant General Baade could have come up with. Baade, an enthusiastic equestrian, had a small rider on a jumping horse made in silver and awarded this "high distinction" – General von Senger und Etterlin received the "EK III with oak leaves" – to his favorites.

"Is it true about Russia?" I was asked again and again when I arrived in Rome. I just shrugged my shoulders: "Order No. 1." That made the answer clear, and so basically no one at the embassy was surprised when, on June 22, Goebbels read Hitler's proclamation about the invasion of Russia. Especially since there had been enough excitement beforehand: Rudolf Hess's flight to England, the costly but ultimately victorious capture of Crete, the sinking of the battleship "Bismarck." Although Mussolini had not been informed of the plans for Russia at his meeting with Hitler on June 2 at the

Brenner Pass, he nevertheless made an Italian expeditionary corps under General Messe available. In addition to the maps of Cyrenaica, the large situation maps of the Russian theater of war, which General von Rintelen brought to the Comando Supremo every day, now lay on our table. The first special reports sounded almost unbelievable: 40,000 prisoners, 2,233 tanks captured, and 40,000 aircraft destroyed. "Let's take off a zero everywhere," said Major General von P., now la. But there seemed to be something to it. At the beginning of July, I received a letter from General Halder that allayed my doubts: "The Russians lost the war in the first eight days. Their losses in lives and equipment are unimaginable. The vastness of Russia will allow them to continue fighting for some time. They will not be able to change their fate. Nor politically
. For all the states of Europe, even the French, are sending their legions to the East. Europe is uniting against Asia and finding the unity that is the historical meaning of this war." Just how dominant this idea of the fight against Bolshevism was at the time, especially among the top military leadership, was also demonstrated to me by a long letter from Jodl dated June 25, 1941:
"... Meanwhile, a tremendous battle is raging at the front, which we are ultimately fighting for civilized humanity, as even the British military attaché in Helsinki has stated. The fighting is very heavy, as the Russians are now throwing almost everything into the battles! But in the end, that is the best thing that could happen to us, because here the decisive battle is easier for us than 1,000 km from the border. It has now been proven that it was high time to eliminate this Asian threat, because otherwise Stalin would have invaded Germany next year like a modern Genghis Khan with thousands of tanks... Apart from the 500-year struggle against the Turks, this is probably the most important decision in Europe. The Russians have undoubtedly fought better than all their opponents...
And from July 19, 1941:
"Tomorrow it will be four weeks since we took up arms against an enemy that few recognized and whose ferocity was already anticipated a year ago today by the Führer when he ordered the preparations for this campaign. Now the gate has been thrown open. What we see is terrible. It is the complete enslavement of man. Yesterday, east of Teipus, a women's battalion was captured along with 1,500 convicts and young communists who had been assembled into a special division. We are east of Smolensk on the highway to Moscow and have learned how it was built. Everyone who lived within a 50 km radius had to come to work every day with a horse, cart, and tools. In return, they received nothing but a pound of bread per person and oats for the horses. Anyone who was even a few minutes late was sent to one of the concentration camps, which are located every 20 km along the highway . . . I don't want to talk about the treatment of our wounded. The fighting is fierce and merciless. Only now is the Wehrmacht learning what war is. It is holding up wonderfully . . . It is now certain that Stalin would have tackled Romania first in the fall of 1941
Romania and then Finland in the fall of 1941. We would not have been able to do anything at this time of year, then he would have stopped deliveries and would have been ready to attack in the spring of 1942. England and America knew this very well, and that is what all their confidence and hope was based on."
In August, Mussolini traveled to the Eastern Front and returned so impressed that he expressed his confidence in victory to Hitler in a telegram. In Africa, Rommel had pushed the British back to Sollum, and morale was high. This seemed to me to be a good opportunity to ask for leave after a year in Italy. "To Germany for three days?" asked the sergeant, surprised. "It's my mother's 70th birthday, I want to surprise her and I've borrowed the money for the flight." "Approved." It was my first flight, an unforgettable experience. To show off his skills, the Italian pilot flew so low over crags and glaciers that I could see animal tracks above the Olperer. I couldn't describe it enough to my parents back home. "Italy has already changed you completely," said my mother as she listened to my description of all the splendor above the cloud cover. I had to agree with her inwardly. This was the first vacation where I didn't feel like a stranger in the midst of my family. I also felt that I had become less naive (still enough!) and more alert, more critical than before.

Returning to Rome still filled with the happiness of those days, I found the mood there so depressing that my joy fell away like a coat. "No sea transport has arrived in Africa since October 16," von P. explained to me, "the Allied air superiority is now overwhelming." Soon after, the Afrika Korps was forced to abandon Marmarika and Cyrenaica.

7. December 1941 – Sinking of the American fleet units in Pearl Harbor, Germany's declaration of war on the USA. The war had taken on the dimensions that Tresckow had predicted two years earlier. The Japanese successes in Singapore provided a welcome counterbalance to the disturbing news from the Eastern Front, where our soldiers were exposed to the terrible onset of winter without protection. "Never have I admired Hitler more than now, when, by virtue of his iron will, he brought the faltering front against Bolshevism to a halt at the front line," wrote Jodl. It

It must have looked bad! Understandably, Jodl said nothing about the crisis in the leadership, but we all sensed that with Brauchitsch's departure on December 14, 1941, and Hitler's assumption of command of the army himself, a new phase had begun. Thoughts of the Eastern Front overshadowed the Christmas holidays.

The recapture of Benghazi at the beginning of 1942 seemed to bring a turn for the better. When General Rommel, who had since achieved legendary fame, came to Rome for a meeting, he also visited the la in the barracks. The hardships of the past battles were clearly written on his angular soldier's face, a face of great simplicity, with an indomitable will in his bright eyes. "The only one who has carved himself into the hearts of his men as a true leader far above the average is Rommel," wrote Jodl. "I will stand by him through thick and thin." It was clear to see that this commander would never demand anything from his troops that he would not demand of himself.

Operation Hercules, originally scheduled for early June—the conquest of Malta—was postponed at Rommel's insistence in favor of the attack on the fortress of Tobruk. With three German and two Italian divisions, the Afrika Korps went on the offensive. Radio message after radio message! Crisis at Bir Hacheim, at Sidi Rezegh, but then – our hearts beat faster – "Tobruk captured! 30,000 prisoners." On June 21, the Comando Supremo was the first to broadcast the special report over the airwaves because the British parliamentarian had contacted the XXL Italian army command. My file basket was full of congratulations for the three newly appointed field marshals, Rommel, Bastico, and Cavallero. Wherever you got into conversation with Italians, in the guesthouse, at the cobbler's, in an osteria, you were asked about Rommel: "E magnifico, questo maresciallo!" Our interpreter now had his hands full. A long telegram from Hitler to Mussolini had arrived from the Führer's headquarters, in which he implored the Duce to give Rommel a free hand to advance further into Egypt. "Duce, the mantle of the goddess of war touches the commander only once; only once can he seize the corner and win the laurels of immortal glory." That was the gist of Hitler's message, and contrary to the warnings of Rintelen, the Comando Supremo, and, as I later heard, Jodl, Hitler's proposal met with an enthusiastic response from the Duce

. In a no less dramatic radio message, Mussolini gave Rommel a free hand to advance on Egypt. Now the maps of the Nile Delta lay on our tables, and la studied the Italian proposals for Egypt's independence. Mussolini, who already saw himself riding into Cairo on a white Arabian horse as the liberator of Islam, flew to Africa with General von Rintelen on June 29, 1942, piloting the plane himself, in order to be closer to the events.

Meanwhile, in the east, Field Marshal von Manstein had captured the fortress of Sevastopol in Crimea, and the valuable oil fields of Maikop were in German hands. In the Far East, General Yamashita had taken Corregidor, giving Japan supremacy in the Pacific region. Once again, the scales of fate seemed to be trembling in the balance.

During those days, my brother Franz passed through Rome on his way from Russia to Crete, where he had been transferred as commodore of the combat and training squadron. Strangely enough, I no longer remember the details of his arrival, but the hours we spent together on the terrace of my guesthouse high above the Pincio remain unforgettable to this day. I saw his tall, slender figure leaning against the

railing, his gaze wandering: to the gray tuff stones of the old Roman wall, the pine trees, and the distant blue chain of the Alban Hills. And I saw how he was suddenly shaken by sobs. The contrast between this peace and the harmonious grandeur of this image and the merciless struggle of the Russian winter at Vyazma, which he had left behind, was too strong.
"Do you remember our little 'porta' at home in the garden?" I asked him, pointing to the Porta Pinciana. "Once outside, no one could find us anymore." No answer. "And the fox's den under the old fir trees and your hunting fever when you shot your first buck?" The trembling of his shoulders stopped, and I saw his long, strong hands loosen their grip on the railing. "And the cranes," I continued, "and how they gathered in their hundreds, and we crawled along the potato furrows to get close to them?"
The spell was broken, he turned to me. A tall boy stood before me, dark with a high forehead, and now his gray eyes laughed and shone in his narrow, emaciated face. "Am I not a crane myself?" he cried, pointing to
the wings on his shoulder pads. "Even on the journey south!" He emptied his glass of Frascati. "Often, during the long dark nights of Russia, these memories you have just conjured up kept me alive inside, just like the thought of my family. This happy childhood is the root of our being. It makes sense to fight for it, so that my children too can one day experience this feeling of security, of being safe in something lasting. But will that ever happen again?"
We sat and recalled what seemed so precious to us in our memories: our childhood on the estate in Pomerania. Our house with its long corridors of reflective parquet flooring, as long as the hunting dogs didn't leave their droppings behind; the park with its old beech trees, under whose roots we dug for treasures; the fields where we rode our ponies, where the first stalks of the winter crops were as much a part of us as the golden wheat fields swept by the Baltic Sea wind. Everything came back, and in the transfiguration of memory, it was many times more beautiful than it had ever been. Then my brother's time as an ensign with the 4th Cavalry Regiment in Potsdam, the first balls, the first love. And then the unforgettable day when my brother took me skiing in the snow-covered mountains for the first time. It had been a tough experience with painful falls because I had no knowledge of skiing. But never before had I felt such freedom as at the summit, where only the soft whistling of mountain jackdaws could be heard as they swooped down with outstretched wings. And never before had I felt such joy as on the descent down to the crocus blossoms among the last patches of snow on the slopes.
And now we were both sitting on a terrace in Rome, and it was war. But who could imagine war on this warm evening in this peace? The sharp contrasts between light and shadow had merged into a soft glow, the deep blue fading to the green and then red of the evening. Hundreds of swallows darted across the sky, coming from nowhere, rising to nowhere, filling the air with incessant little cries. "Now that we're older and wiser, it doesn't make us so sad anymore," said my brother, pointing his pipe stem at the sharply jagged edge of the trees against the sunset. I looked at him, saw the eyes deeply embedded under the sharp yoke of his forehead
and wondered how perfectly we still understood each other.
Then we walked down the Via Veneto, Rome's grand boulevard. It could have been three times as long, so proud was I of my companion in his smart tropical uniform, which made the Roman women turn their heads. We ate in a ristorante on Via Condotti, each of us intent on maintaining the carefree mood. It was only when my brother asked the waiter about the morning train to Naples that the great shadow loomed behind us again: the war. And now, inevitably, the mutual questioning began as to whether and how the war could be won. "Jodl should do something for the Luftwaffe," my brother said. "Göring is a buffoon. If we continue to be neglected like this, we can count on our fingers when we will have lost."
My concerned face prompted him to comfort me. "Well, maybe I'm being too pessimistic. But I'll tell you one thing: I've heard rumors in Russia that are hair-raising and shameful. I have no idea if they're true. Once this spell is over, the Wehrmacht will have to clean up thoroughly."
The next morning, I took my brother to the train to Naples. I looked up at the window and saw a face that suddenly seemed strangely changed. "Take care, Meister," I said, as I used to when we tightened

our ski bindings. He nodded. And then the train started moving, slowly and inexorably. All you can do is watch it go. Slowly, the train gets smaller, then it disappears around a bend, and your handkerchief is wet when you put it away.
Soon after, a letter arrived from my brother in Crete. He sounded confident and calm, so I shook off my dark premonitions. "Enjoy Rome," he concluded his letter. And wasn't he right? I decided to consciously detach myself from all political events and enjoy everything Rome had to offer, and the more I learned to understand, the more I loved the city. "You will never see Rome like this again," Professor Curtius, the famous archaeologist, once told me during a guided tour. "Through the blackout, you see a Rome that even I have never known before." I never knew what to love more: the colorful array of flower stalls on the Spanish Steps, the magnificent bowl of the fountain on the way to the Villa Medici, the mysterious statue of Cybele among the ancient holm oaks on the
Palatine Hill, flooded with light from the evening sun, or the singing of invisible monks in San Onofrio. I wrote to my brother the verses of Byron: "Thou heart that gave men glory and the state triumph, that drove peoples, heroes, gods like a stream. Thou home of a world, of which a stump of a column still delights the blind. You, Rome of all men. What is suffering and hardship before you? The owl cries out from temple ruins and cypress trees, whose bosom spans millennia, in which history trembles breathlessly and time reveals its head. In every grain of sand here, the old world of bliss still glows."
5.
In dust and ashes
The Afrika Korps' struggle for El Alamein had begun. Hundreds of kilometers away from their supply base, exposed to relentless air attacks in open desert terrain, Rommel tried in vain to break through the British positions. In response, on October 24, 1942, the British 8th Army under Field Marshal Montgomery launched a counterattack.
At 2 a.m. on November 3, a five-page radio message from Rommel arrived, in which he announced his intention to withdraw. The next day, there was a sharp breeze blowing through our barracks: urgent radio communications with the "Wolf's Lair" in East Prussia: the Führer had only learned of the intended retreat at ten o'clock in the morning, and the reason for the delay had to be determined immediately. The head of our radio station, First Lieutenant Hardenberg, was able to prove that, even while the last Morse code messages from El Alamein were being received, the first paragraphs of the message had already been sent from Rome to East Prussia by telex at three o'clock in the morning. As it later became known, the delay had occurred in the OKW itself, and the officer responsible was punished with demotion.
Hitler was faced with a fait accompli, and his reply reached Rommel only after he had already begun his retreat: "The German people, with faith in your leadership and in the bravery of the German and Italian troops under your command, are following the heroic defensive
In the situation in which you find yourself, there can be no other thought than to persevere, not to retreat a single step, and to throw every weapon and every fighter into the battle. Despite its superiority, the enemy will also be at the end of its strength. It would not be the first time in history that the stronger will has triumphed over the stronger battalions of the enemy. But you cannot show your troops any other path than that to victory or death."
Rommel wrote in his later published memoirs: "This order had a strong effect on the troops. They were prepared to sacrifice themselves to the last man in accordance with the Führer's instructions." Thanks to Rommel's decisiveness, they were spared this senseless sacrifice; another telegram from Hitler subsequently gave permission to retreat.
On November 7, upon entering the barracks, I found Major i. G. von P. already poring over a bundle of Italian and German radio messages. "Give me a confidential letter number, urgent message to OKW. Write: 'Large convoy heading east near Gibraltar, presumed landing in French North Africa.'" After a

call from Rintelen: "OKW still believes in reinforcements for Malta or a landing behind Rommel's lines near Benghazi, what nonsense."
A few hours later, it became known that American troops had landed in Oran. "How will the French behave?" was the much-discussed question. As is known today, the French commander-in-chief, Admiral Darlan, had initially ordered a defensive battle against the landing. Only after receiving a secret order from Marshal Pétain did he join the "Free French Forces" under General Juin and thus the Allies. The French fleet, on the other hand, voluntarily sank itself in the port of Toulon.
With the hastily ordered dispatch of German troops to Tunis, an action was carried out that General von Rintelen had been pushing for in vain for months. Once again, our barracks became a meeting place for numerous officers passing through. One of them, my cousin, General Fritz Frhr. von Broich, commander of the 21st Panzer Division, was just as skeptical as a young general staff officer, Colonel i. G. Count Stauffenberg, who later attempted to assassinate Hitler. Stauffenberg spoke with such bitterness and candor that it shook me. Shortly after his arrival in Tunis, he was
a fighter-bomber attack, losing an eye, his right hand, and two fingers on his left hand. The fact that he nevertheless wrote a card from the Italian military hospital shortly thereafter was a typical sign of his willpower.
On November 9, I received a call from the OKW. Jodl was on the line. "When was the last time you heard from your brother?" I could immediately tell from Jodl's voice that something had happened. "Please tell me everything right away," I asked, already knowing what it was. "Franz has not returned from a flight to Tobruk since November 2," I heard Jodl say slowly. "Your mother asked me to inform you. Everything is being done; they have been searching for three days, so far in vain. I'll call you back soon." Oh, my brother, my brother! I went into the embassy garden. What had happened on November 2? I remembered that I had been invited to dinner that evening with Mrs. Rommel at the home of Neurath, the Foreign Office liaison officer to the Afrika Korps; we had tried to overcome our depression with silly jokes. On that day, at that time, my brother was perhaps drifting helplessly in the sea, and I had no idea. I was given leave to visit my sister-in-law, the children, and my parents, and found comfort in their courage.
Before returning, I visited Irma Jodl in Dahlem. I found her in a very depressed mood and heard that there had been severe tensions between her husband and Hitler. The next day, Jodl himself arrived to be examined for his increasing sciatica. During a walk through the Grunewald, he told me the reason for the dispute:
"It's been going on for a long time, since August. The Führer had sent me to Konrad, the commander of the Mountain Corps in the Caucasus, to check whether, as Konrad and List reported, it was really impossible to drop paratroopers near Tuapse. You know that there are oil wells south of the Caucasus. When I arrived at Konrad's, the first snow was already falling. You have to know the mountains to understand what happens next. Parachuting troops into that terrain would have been a crime. Konrad asked me to arrange for the withdrawal of his troops, which had already advanced as far as the high passes to the south, where supplies were hardly possible anymore. I had to make this very clear to the Führer; at the same time, I understood what was important to him—the great dream of a breakthrough to Persia. I can tell you,
I have never seen anyone lose their temper like that. 'I didn't send you, Jodl, to report back to me with nothing but reservations,' he yelled, 'no sooner are my men out of here than they succumb to outside influences. That was the last straw: "If you want to lose your paratroopers, then drop them off at Tuapse, my Führer," I said angrily, "you can send someone else to deliver orders." I stormed out and slammed the door behind me. That was back in August. Well, since then, he no longer comes to meals with us, no longer shakes my hand, and stenographers write down every word during the daily briefing. Frontline flights are also forbidden for us officers from the OKW."(12)
I was so shocked by this description that – not for the first time – the thought crossed my mind whether Hitler could still be considered normal. When I hinted at the yodel, he stopped, looked at me absently,

and then continued on in silence. Without responding to my question, he said: "Every day I press Schmundt on the deployment of troops. Paulus is to relieve me as soon as Stalingrad is cleared. I am then to be given the Mountain Corps in Finland." "I'll keep my fingers crossed for you," I said. "How are things going at Stalingrad?" "If the Romanians, who are good soldiers, and the Italians hold out, things may still turn out well. But the troops have to endure terrible things." Then we started talking about the "Red Orchestra," a spy ring working for the Russians. "Can you imagine Germans betraying us to the Bolsheviks?"

We were now on our way back. "Last year you told me that you would tell me more about the Führer's reasons for the Russian campaign," I asked.

"The Führer saw the situation this way," Jodl began to explain: "In 1939, the USSR was pressured into a pact by both England and Germany at the same time. The English commission was stalled in Moscow for many weeks, while a pact with the Germans was concluded in two days. If the Russians had concluded a pact with England, either there would have been no war or Germany's defeat would have been complete within a few months. The USSR expected the Western European nations to bleed each other dry. Germany's unexpected victory made them fear an anti-Bolshevik Europe united under German leadership, so they pushed for the

Romanian oil region in Bessarabia. Ergo: the former friend is putting a loaded pistol in his pocket."

"But is it certain that the Russians wanted to attack?"

"The Führer was convinced of this; he suspected secret agreements between England and Russia. No other reason could have justified this enormous risk. We did not need Russian territory; with a reliably neutral Russia behind us, the war against the Axis powers could not be won. Whether there would have been political possibilities to bridge the tensions with Russia, I cannot judge. We all advised against the war in Russia, and the navy found it most difficult to accept. But all arguments collapsed when the Führer replied that there were 160 divisions at the border and that the Soviet Union would then attack."

We had reached the ridge in Dahlem, and I went into the house to say goodbye to Irma. "Don't tell her everything," Jodl asked, "she often gets so upset anyway, and I'm worried about her health."

When I returned to Rome, I found a lot of news: 50,000 Americans and 30,000 British had landed in North Africa; the four marshals—Rommel, Kesselring, Cavallero, and Bastico—had met for consultations at the Arco dei Fileni in Libya; Rintelen's plane had collided with a fighter during takeoff, his head had hit the wall of the plane, and only his hard Westphalian skull had saved him.

The bad news kept coming. On November 22, 1942, the 6th Army was surrounded at Stalingrad. There wasn't one of us who didn't have a relative there! The closer Christmas got, the more threatening the reports became. The thought of the encircled troops weighed heavily on us all as we imagined them fighting a losing battle in the freezing cold, snow, and hunger. "You had to have nerves of steel," wrote Jodl, "when you listened to the report that a young captain from Paulus' staff gave to the Führer." He continued: "With a sobriety and determination, without reproaches or complaints, and therefore all the more shocking. I often feel like a bastard for going to bed in a room and sleeping despite all my worries." Would Paulus act on his own authority and break out with his army? When the Wehrmacht commander announced the surrender on January 30, a voice said, "Now we can bury all hope." No one disagreed. "Now the cruel demise of the army is over," Jodl wrote.

announced the surrender, a voice said, "Now we can bury all hope." No one disagreed. "Now the cruel dying of the army is over," Jodl wrote. "It was a hard time. Even Dante's Inferno paled in comparison to this end."13

In February 1943, at the same time that hundreds of thousands of civilians were falling victim to the first carpet bombing of Hamburg and Cologne, the first reports came in from a conference in Casablanca, where the Allies and Russians were demanding "unconditional surrender." If the enemy demanded not only the elimination of the regime but also of the nation, was there any other option but to continue fighting? At the home of my friend, the young legation counselor Sigismund Baron von Braun from the embassy to the Vatican, there was very frank discussion about "a new government."

Such conversations made one feel rather uneasy, because if there was an informer among the guests, one could be reported. A conversation with an Abwehr officer I met on the Via Veneto brought me into serious conflict. Over an espresso, he told me that he was currently working on the Sahara border. "Of course, we must do everything we can to end the war and lose," he concluded his report. With feigned indifference, I asked him, "And what does your boss Canaris say about that?" "He thinks exactly the same as I do." I knew my counterpart to be a staunch opponent of the regime; we had often discussed it at length in the past. However, I did not understand this attitude on the part of an active officer at war. "Isn't that outright treason?" I asked him. His face turned red. "You never understand when I'm joking," he said casually. "This is too serious for jokes," I replied and stood up. He accompanied me part of the way. "Have you ever thought about the fact that the only thing that matters now is preserving what we have?" the major said, now very seriously. "How can we preserve it if the Bolsheviks overrun us? As long as there is still a glimmer of hope, we must continue to fight!" I exclaimed. "But that hope no longer exists," said the major, saluted briefly, and left.

The conversation troubled me for a long time. Without being able to assess the entire foreign policy situation—we only learned what directly concerned us—I understood that there was truth in his words. But everything in me resisted action that violated all the principles we had known and that had become guidelines.

The defense had its own troops, the Brandenburg Regiment, which were repeatedly deployed to hot spots. How could one use one's soldiers against the enemy and at the same time work with the enemy, i.e., against them?

This interlude had taken place before Rommel's army had to retreat before Montgomery's troops along the same long route of former victory through the Libyan desert. By the end of January, Tripoli was already in British hands. The loss of this last colony of the former Italian empire was a severe blow to the pride and morale of the Italian people. Criticism of the fascist regime was voiced more freely and openly every day.

On May 7, 1943, 250,000 Axis troops surrendered at Cap Bon in Tunisia. Two days later, we heard details of this catastrophe, during which soldiers from the Panzer Army tried to escape by climbing onto the floats of seaplanes, from five exhausted and ragged young officers who reported to the barracks. They had managed to escape across the Mediterranean in an adventurous flight on a small storm boat. Despite the hardships of thirst and frequent shelling, these young officers, among them the son of Field Marshal von Kluge and a nephew of Field Marshal von Witzleben, were so inspired by the will to continue fighting that I was secretly ashamed of the doubts that the conversation with the Abwehr officer had left me with. But the doubts returned with nagging persistence, and when a friend from my youth, Colonel von Bonin, formerly Rommel's adjutant in the Afrika Korps, was transferred from the Eastern Front back to Italy, I aired my concerns to him. Bonin had been my fallen brother's closest friend in the 4th Cavalry Regiment, and I could trust him. When he entered the barracks, I noticed the similarity between his expression and that of the young officers who had fled across the Mediterranean: the same exhaustion in their war-torn faces. But at the same time, there was an unbroken spirit despite all the defeats and the unconscious or even conscious superiority of the front-line soldier, gained from daily encounters with death. In the afternoon, we drove to the beach at Ostia and had a long conversation, first about Tunis, the East, and finally about Hitler. We discussed the line between genius and madness

, and whether the obvious mistakes in leadership raised the question of whether the war could be won without Hitler. Bonin took up the questions with his characteristic objectivity, but then said that there was no need to be so skeptical: we were still in possession of enemy territory, and anyone who, like him, had witnessed Hitler's charisma during the winter offensive of 1941 could not ignore this factor.

Shortly afterwards, I went on vacation and visited the Jodls in Badgastein. It was Jodl's first vacation since the beginning of the war, a spa vacation to cure his sciatica. He was unusually open and receptive to conversations, which he otherwise avoided. "Tell him everything you hear," Irma asked me, "he has

no idea what people are saying." On a walk to the "Grüner Baum," I cautiously tried to hint at the criticism of the leadership I had heard in Rome and even at the conversation with the Abwehr officer. "Don't you think we should end the war on our own, simply to preserve more substance?" I suddenly heard myself repeating, almost word for word, what had seemed so reprehensible to me just a short time before in my conversation with the Abwehr officer. Jodl was silent at first, then he rebuked me almost sharply, so that it took Irma's mediation to reconcile us. Not long after, he wrote to me in Rome: "One more word on our big topic. You must fight through thick and thin to win this war. Anyone who doesn't believe in that would be better off shooting themselves right away. I have seen that I need to support you more. Over time, every person becomes a product of their environment; only giants shape their environment themselves. It is as I told you: there are only a few heroes, only they fight to the death, even when death is already before them. The masses only fight as long as they believe in the possibility of success. When they no longer see it, everyone looks for a convenient way out, with which they then conceal their broken will or their cowardice. Those who believe that peace must be made now invent the excuse of preserving substance and thus refuse to see that they are sacrificing everything to destruction."

The power of conviction that spoke from this letter was able to emotionally allay the doubts that However, it did not quite convince my intellect. At times, I wondered whether working in a central office, i.e., at a desk, might cloud one's perspective.

The African theater of war was lost, and now an Allied landing in Italy was to be expected soon. Field Marshal Kesselring was appointed Commander-in-Chief South, and four new German divisions were transferred to southern and central Italy and placed under his command. He himself was subordinate to the Italian Comando Supremo and faced the difficult task of reconciling its wishes with those of Hitler. Kesselring, who later described himself in his memoirs as a "soldier to the last day," was by no means a pure soldier. Originally a member of the army, he had, like many capable general staff officers, transferred to the Luftwaffe when this branch of the Wehrmacht was created and had been particularly understanding in supporting me after my brother's death. Like Rintelen, he had a great gift for winning the affection of the Italians with his charm and intelligence, without losing sight of his own goals. His strength of character was evident after the war when he was sentenced to death and later pardoned to imprisonment, during which time many Italians expressed their sympathy for him. Among our now frequent barracks guests was once again one of Kesselring's division commanders, the aforementioned General Ernst Günther Baade, with his inseparable companions, the wire-haired dachshund Brummer and the orderly Bierentrümpel.

When the Allies landed in Sicily, Rintelen's first situation report still sounded confident, but by July 12, 1943, it stated with sober clarity: "Hope in military circles has vanished, doubts as to whether the addition of new forces is still expedient." In the midst of the tension of those days, a telegram from the Luftwaffe brought a moment of amusement: Göring had ordered the heavy porphyry coffins of the Staufer emperors to be moved from Palermo Cathedral to the mainland. "The fat man may have worries," sighed the la.

Air raid sirens had sounded frequently in recent weeks as streams of Allied bombers made their way south or, conversely, to the industrial centers of northern Italy. No one paid any attention to them; Rome was considered taboo. "Man, that's for us," cried a sergeant as heavy explosions shook our little wooden barracks on July 19, 1943. We ran into the

garden. "There they are up there, and there's a second formation!" The tiny silver fish in the summer blue sky were soon surrounded by white smoke balls from exploding anti-aircraft shells, but they continued on their course unhindered. From the garden roof, I saw thick black smoke billowing up from the direction of the church of San Lorenzo fuori le mure, and the next moment, to my horror, an open truck raced past with completely naked corpses, the air pressure having apparently torn their clothes off. As more bombs fell, I ran to the embassy basement, where we heard that Mussolini and Hitler were meeting in Feltre at that very moment.

Although the destruction in Rome was relatively minor, there was tremendous excitement that the Holy City had been bombed. Even during the hours of the attack, the Pope could be seen driving slowly through the streets near the Lateran, blessing the population and praying for the victims of the attack.
The Italian people's weariness of war could no longer be hidden from anyone. On July 25, 1943, a sweltering hot day, the Gran Consiglio del Fascismo, the Grand Council of Fascism, was convened, an event that had not taken place since 1939. Rumors were flying, but the city was calm. At night, I was awakened by loud shouts and clapping at the Miltone guesthouse and ran out onto the terrace. "Evviva Badoglio, Evviva Vittorio Emanuele!" I heard people shouting, and down on the street, people were hugging each other. Wearing all kinds of nightclothes, the Italian guests at the guesthouse waved down to the street and hugged each other in joy. "Good heavens," I heard my friend Hildegard Haenichen say behind me. "It seems to me that Badoglio has become Duce."
The next day was a Sunday. I went to the embassy very early, while the streets were still quiet. But what was that? Hundreds of fasces, the symbol of the Fascist Party, glittered in the morning light on the street, on the sidewalk, in the gutter, on the main road. A man came out of the Grand Hotel with the symbol on his lapel; he had obviously slept through the events of the night. "Attenzione!" a passerby called out to him across the Via Veneto, "il Fascismo non esiste più." The man stopped, made one of the typical Italian hand gestures, tore off the badge, and threw it into the gutter with a laugh. "Va bene, va bene!" As he continued on his way
, he turned around once more: "Va bene!" and waved. What a peaceful revolution! No one here seemed to take it seriously; what was useful was good and not high treason, a change of party as in peacetime. But how would this be received at the Führer's headquarters?
I wrote to Alfred Jodl about my impressions, and he replied: "When I reported to the Führer that the streets were littered with party badges, his reaction was very displeased. 'Only an officer would report such nonsense,' he reproached me. 'Once again, we see how little generals understand politics. A movement that is so deeply rooted in the people cannot be destroyed overnight.'"
It was not until days later that the exact events became known. Before the meeting in Feltre on July 19, Italian generals had demanded that Mussolini make it clear to Hitler that it was impossible to continue the war. Mussolini had not complied with this demand, especially since Hitler himself spoke incessantly, except for the brief pause when the bombing of Rome was announced. The Gran Consiglio was then convened for this purpose. Minister of Justice Grandi demanded the removal of the regime and the transfer of military leadership to the king. After a 20-hour session and a long speech by Mussolini, a vote was taken and Grandi's resolution was accepted by 19 votes to 7. Mussolini asked who should report this result to the king. "You," Grandi had called out, "you, you yourself." However, Mussolini first drove to his Villa Torlonia and did not report to the king until the next day. Upon leaving the Palazzo Reale, the Duce was arrested, taken in an ambulance to a Carabinieri barracks, and from there to the island of Ponza. At that moment, no one knew exactly what his fate would be.
How would Badoglio behave now, how would Hitler? Hitler's first countermeasure was to transfer troops to Italy without first consulting the Comando Supremo. Soon, eight German divisions under Rommel's command were stationed in northern Italy, and a paratrooper division under General Student was transferred to the Rome area. Rumors circulated about Hitler's plan to arrest the king. In the city, the Italians dug trenches, secured government buildings with barbed wire, and assembled five divisions around the city. Against whom? Were we still allies?
We embassy staff were only allowed to leave the city with special passes. There were guards with machine guns everywhere. The tense atmosphere intensified after a second air raid on Rome, but calmed down when Field Marshal Kesselring declared Rome an "open city."
General von Rintelen was convinced that it was the behavior of the German leadership that had caused the Italian turnaround, and he conveyed Marshal Badoglio's message to Hitler: "Italy will bring the war to an honorable end." "That is the greatest insolence in world history!" Hitler had yelled at him, knowing about Badoglio's secret intentions. Jodl was therefore quite justified in being very sharp

during the meeting in Bologna on August 14, 1943, between Rommel, Rintelen, and General Roatta. "He had asked Roatta point-blank whether Badoglio intended to use the four Italian divisions withdrawn from southern France against us or against the British," the la told me.14 The skepticism of the Führer's headquarters regarding Badoglio's intentions later proved to be entirely justified. Already in June, before Mussolini's dismissal, the marshal had established contacts with Eisenhower, saying that his government would be proud to march alongside America to inevitable victory.

On September 3, 1943, the Allies landed on the southern tip of Italy. Events followed in rapid succession: Ambassador von Mackensen was replaced by Ambassador Rahn, General von Rintelen by General Toussaint. On September 8, powerful bomber units flew over the city, their target being Kesselring's headquarters in Frascati. The telephone connection to the Commander-in-Chief South was interrupted. Radio messages came in from southern and central Italy reporting that a strong convoy was located near Naples.

As so often, I sat at the radio and turned the dial back and forth to listen to enemy stations. Then suddenly the words came through loud and clear: "The Italians have signed the surrender." It was exactly 6 p.m. (the actual signing had already taken place on August 3).

"Pick up your luggage, a special train for the embassy is ready!" Our car raced through the still darkened city and collided so hard with an Italian military patrol on Via Veneto that the Italian driver's helmet flew into our car. Captain

Hoppe and the Italian capitano from the other car got out and apologized politely. The former bond of alliance and comrades-in-arms still held. The porter at the guesthouse shook his head at the sight of our hasty nighttime departure.

The files were now burned in the embassy garden. Columns and cypress trees glowed in the light of a blazing fire. Piece by piece, I tore up our files and threw them into the flames: the victory report from Tobruk, the advance on El Alamein, Mussolini's plans to march on Cairo, then the radio messages about the breakthrough of the 8th British Army. The fire burned all night, and three years crumbled into dust and ashes.

6.

At Mussolini's headquarters

"It is made of clay, there are shards" Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Faust I"

I was sitting at home with my parents in Potsdam and had reported pretty much everything: about the escape from Rome on the embassy's special train, about the uneasy feeling during the escape and the behavior of the Italians. The Carabinieri accompanying the train didn't seem to know themselves which side they belonged to. The train had first crossed Italy and then traveled north from Ancona to Rimini. Thank God we stopped there, because there was no water on the train. Rintelen's orderly, Count Henckel-Donnersmarck, quickly showed me a little of the city and also the church where Francesca da Rimini is buried. In Bologna, we encountered Rommel's units advancing south; it was good to feel order amid the general chaos here. On the other hand, the sight of endless freight cars, closed in the scorching heat and full of our former allies, who were apparently being taken to Germany, was disheartening. One could imagine their mood, since for them, despite the surrender, the war was not yet over.

It felt strange to sit on the old sofa at home, whose upholstery still bore the yellowish burn mark from my father's cigar, after the turmoil of the past few days. But then, just as I was telling Luis Trenker, who was also on the embassy train, a telegram arrived: "Depart immediately with emergency luggage via Munich front office to northern Italy." So, Italy again? We puzzled over where and what kind of post it could be, as we had no idea what the situation was like there now.

All we had learned from the newspapers was that Mussolini had been freed by Skorzeny and was staying in Germany. As I packed, many thoughts ran through my head. I had found my parents looking very old, and my mother's health caused me serious concern. But I was no less worried about Irma Jodl, who was suffering from severe pain in her spine and looked alarmingly miserable. "Please don't tell

Alfred about this," she begged me, but she promised to consult Professor Sauerbruch. For all these reasons, I had considered seeking employment in my homeland, but now it was too late. And if I was honest with myself, I was happy to return to Italy. Firstly, because the atmosphere at home was so much more oppressive. Secondly, because I had grown to sincerely love Italy and its people. Their pronounced humanity, quick reactions, and distinct joie de vivre combined with a melancholic wisdom of renunciation had captivated me. In addition, outside of my homeland, I somehow felt much freer and more outspoken among soldiers than among civilians. We trusted each other even when our opinions sometimes differed. There is no doubt that we suppressed the rumors that were circulating, partly consciously, partly unconsciously. When a doctor at home told me about the gassing of Jews, I was naive enough to laugh at her. "We're not in the Middle Ages!" Then I received a private letter from my eldest brother Rob, who was serving as a war administration officer in Dnipropetrovsk, Russia: "These scoundrels from the civil administration, themselves of humble origins, look down on the Russians as subhuman and make no effort whatsoever to understand their mentality. The regional commissioner is a junior officer whose house is furnished with private property from France; he acts like a satrap and is one. These people are more likely to cause us to lose the war than the defeats of our brave troops."

All this was extremely depressing – what would Italy do now?

I found a mysterious atmosphere in the front command post; no one knew where things were headed. "Be ready to leave tomorrow morning." At seven o'clock, a large black Mercedes limousine picked me up, the driver an SS man with a "Führer Headquarters" armband. At the "Vier Jahreszeiten" we picked up Captain Hoppe, who had already been to Rome to meet our
staff. He told me about our future assignment: "German Wehrmacht liaison staff with the Duce." That sounded good, even though we were aware of the questionable nature of the mission.

At the airport in Riem, we heard that Mussolini had already taken off for Italy half an hour earlier, piloting the plane himself, with Lieutenant Colonel Jandl. The second plane, to which the captain and I were assigned, carried former fascist officials, including party secretary Farinacci. When I saw the Italians in their loden coats and traditional hats, I initially thought they were locals. But after takeoff, I had no doubt about their origin; their return to their homeland and to new positions of authority was expressed with southern temperament in loud singing and throwing cigarette packs at each other.

While Mussolini had flown directly to Forli, close to his castle near Predappio, our plane landed in Verona, apparently during an alarm. The pilot was given such a thorough dressing-down by the airfield commander that my somewhat romantic idea of the importance of my future position quickly melted away. The commander of the front control center also flatly refused to allow us to continue our journey: "We know nothing about any orders from the Führer or the Duce. Report back tomorrow morning." So we had time, and I did not regret seeing Verona. There was a market in the Piazza delle Erbe, and the colorful picture of the brightly colored umbrellas of the stalls with their splendor of flowers would have delighted any Impressionist. Cangrande looks down from his pedestal with an almost mischievous expression, sitting on his warhorse with his legs strangely stretched out. I looked at the well-preserved, spacious arena of the amphitheater, the bronze doors of San Zeno, the tomb of the great lovers, and then at dusk I stood on the old Scaliger Bridge, looked down into the ice-green, crystal-clear water of the Adige River, and dreamed myself back into the legendary world of Dietrich von Bern.

Apparently, it had become known in the meantime that Mussolini was to take the helm of the government in northern Italy again, because the next morning the reception at the front command post was almost reverential. "Your car is already at your disposal." As we drove off, a small barefoot boy in a German tropical uniform ran up to us: "Devo vedere il Duce" ("I must see the Duce
see him"). It took some effort to get rid of him after a few blocks. The drive took us along the Via Emilia until we turned south at Cesare. The somewhat monotonous picture of olive and rice crops changed to an impression of almost melancholic beauty: the copper-colored mountain ranges of the Abruzzi welcomed us, and soon the car was climbing lonely passes. I was just wondering how the mail

– one bright spot in this life – could ever reach us here when I spotted the silhouette of a tank against the night sky. We had reached our destination. An SS guard emerged from behind a wall and demanded our identity cards. Then the car drove up a steep ramp into the courtyard of Rocca della Camminate Castle. Lieutenant Colonel Jandl, leader of our staff, who had most recently been in Rome, was already standing in the gate entrance. I was so tired that I asked to be shown to my room and immediately fell into a death-like sleep.

When I woke up the next morning, I sat up with a start and rubbed my eyes. Where was I? In front of me, an elephant balanced on a rope with an umbrella in its trunk, tigers jumped through colorful hoops, and monkeys juggled balls. "That was the children's room," explained the interpreter who slept in the same room, laughing. I got dressed and crept quietly down the stairs; it was still dead quiet in the castle. I felt like Alice in Wonderland and wouldn't have been surprised if I had suddenly encountered the White Rabbit in one of the long corridors. On the lowest floor, I discovered a gate to the garden that surrounded the castle. Rocca della Camminate Castle is a mighty rectangular building made of ochre-colored stones, dominated in the middle by a towering campanile in the style of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. On the platform of the campanile, I spotted a guard who watched me suspiciously through his glass. Upon returning to the castle, I found our staff gathered around a breakfast table offering such unusual delicacies as real coffee and butter with honey. Half intoxicated by this unreal environment, half filled with defensiveness, I sat down at the typewriter. At noon, Ambassador Rudolf Rahn arrived. He came directly from Rome and, in his spirited manner, described the events following the armistice and his successful negotiations with Marshal Graziani to take over the War Ministry. Rahn promised that Graziani, the hero of the Abyssinian campaign, would have a great impact on the northern Italians. Rahn made an impression on me. Tall, with intelligent eyes under bushy eyebrows, he spoke with great openness and urgency. Despite all the skepticism, he was able to instill confidence that there might still be a way out. With his spirited candor and his power of initiative, he seemed to me to represent a completely new type of diplomat.

The appointment of the Duce's new government on September 27, 1943, naturally formed the main topic of conversation between us and the officers of Mussolini's bodyguard, who were responsible for his security alongside the SS unit. The commander of this bodyguard was Colonel Albonetti, a former colonial soldier and veteran of the Abyssinian campaign. During our meals together, he liked to tell ambiguous stories that had his comrades doubled over with laughter. In high spirits, Albonetti also put on shows; he could pierce the skin on his arm without losing a drop of blood, or he would perform the belly dance of an Eritrean girl. His adjutant, Captain Cerbati, a stocky athlete with handsome features, boasted of his royal Arabian ancestry. Both officers wore the current uniform, a black shirt with a tie, while the personal physician, Dr. Baldini, a sensitive, cultured man, wore civilian clothes. He was undoubtedly the most intelligent of the trio, with a strong chin and cool gray eyes that critically observed the German allies. The idealism of these Italians, their belief in a resurgence of Italy under the leadership of their Duce, came from a conviction that one had to envy.

Colonel Albonetti showed us the castle, a gift from the Italian people to Mussolini in the early days of his government. It is located not far from Predappio, Mussolini's birthplace, where his father was a blacksmith. All the rooms of the castle were crammed with pictures and sculptures of the Duce. We were amused by a naive carving under glass depicting the birth of the Duce. You could see the mother in bed with a curly-haired bambino at her breast, while a young man called out through the door to the father at the anvil: "E arrivato!" - He has come! In the tower, we discovered countless trophies from the Abyssinian campaign, and Albonetti was in his element as he showed off these

The view from the tower was unique: to the south, the steep mountain range of San Marino; in the background, the Gran Sasso, where Mussolini had initially been held captive. The Adriatic Sea shimmered on the eastern horizon, and to the north, the steep chain of the Julian Alps rose behind the seemingly endless Po Valley.

Our chief of liaison staff appeared daily at Mussolini's for a briefing. We, the members of the sub-staff, only got to see him when he was out walking in the garden. He would then nod amiably and raise his hand in a Roman salute. He looked miserable, his coal-black eyes deep-set, but his expression still had an aura of Caesar-like grandeur. Edda Ciano, the racy, dark-haired wife of the former foreign minister Count Ciano, was also often seen. In a colorful plaid skirt with Scottish-patterned stockings, the countess looked very young, her narrow face with dark, burning eyes betraying a passionate temperament. The Duce's private rooms were inaccessible to us. So I missed seeing a painting on Japanese silk, a gift from the Tenno, for which an American had allegedly offered 16 million lire. In our offices, however, we found a cupboard with historical costumes, which gave us an opportunity to transform ourselves into doges and pages one evening. I was particularly impressed by a trip with Ambassador Rahn and Albonetti to Faenza, a center of Italian ceramic art. Boccia games in the garden, walks on lonely Abruzzo paths—all this made this world seem unreal, and I was glad when we were transferred to Lake Garda on October 6.

It was already dark when we arrived in Gargnano; we spent the night in what would become the Duce's residence, the villa of the industrialist Feltrinelli. When I woke up shivering with cold, I heard a loud roar and ran to the window. There lay Lake Garda before me, but not the smooth blue surface that I had so often seen in smoky train station halls as a secret destination of longing. No, it was more like a Norwegian fjord with ice-green, rapidly rolling waves breaking foaming on the shore. In the background, the mountains rose steeply, crowned by the snow-covered peak of Monte Baldo. In striking contrast to the dark indigo background, a wooden barge glided close to the shore, its huge yellow sails trimmed tightly to the wind. In the icy tramontana, the mountain wind, the palm leaves bent almost horizontally, the air was like
champagne. For a brief moment, the war was forgotten, and I couldn't help but rejoice inwardly at the sight of such beauty. It was here that Goethe wrote his "Iphigenia": "Thus we recognize you, gods, by your sparing, long and wisely prepared gifts."

A villa close to the Feltrinellis was requisitioned for our staff, which was reserved for Mussolini himself. I felt quite uncomfortable when the owners, a cultured elderly couple, had to move out at short notice and move into rented accommodation. "Oggi noi, domani voi" – today us, tomorrow you, I heard the old lady say. The joy at the sight of the lake would not return.

At that time, Gargnano had about 1,000 inhabitants, merchants, craftsmen, fishermen, and winegrowers, interspersed with a few industrialists who sought shelter here from bombing raids. Above the village with its extremely picturesque harbor ran the Gardesana, a magnificently bold road, partly carved into the rock, which stretched along the western shore of the lake.

Villa Feltrinelli, the Duce's official residence, was located close to the shore, somewhat hidden away, an unattractive, old-fashioned building painted green for camouflage. From our garden, we could often watch the Duce cycling or walking. At first, his nephew Vittorio lived with him, later his wife Donna Rachele, his youngest children, Anna Maria and Romano, Donna Gina, the wife of his son Bruno, and finally the German doctor, Dr. Zacharias.

When it became apparent that Villa Feltrinelli was too small to hold meetings of the newly formed Republica Sociale Italiana, Villa Orselim at the entrance to the village was designated as the seat of government. Mussolini now traveled there twice a day; no special security measures were taken for this short distance. He could not make trips, such as to Clara Petacci, his girlfriend, without being accompanied by armed SS units. We only had loose contact with this SS unit, but I remember a conversation with a Sturmführer, a young Baltic baron. "I want to settle in Siberia," he explained to me, and when I pointed out, with some astonishment, the treatment of the Balts by the Russians, he sneered contemptuously: "Russia will be nothing more than a small buffer state between us and Japan."

I had contracted sciatica while bathing in October and had to go to Berlin for treatment. All the advertising columns proclaimed total war, but you didn't even need to read it; the sight of the ruins was enough. When I reached Landgrafenstraße after a long walk—the Anhalterbahnhof station had been

destroyed and the train had stopped outside—I found only smoking ruins of my relatives' house. "We now live at Amselstraße No. . . ." was written in chalk on a wall. "We are alive," I read these words over and over again, somehow happy in this world of ruins. The train only started moving from Breitenbachplatz. The crowd was enormous, and a fat woman climbed over a railing and got her dress caught. Now she was sitting up there and laughing: "Jolly good, how they're all jostling for work!"
The last night in Berlin brought another heavy attack; in the Dahiem apartment where my cousin had put me up, all the window panes burst, and it was certainly minus 16 degrees outside. After the all-clear, I ran over to Jodls, and we were able to quickly extinguish some phosphorus bombs that were lying around in the garden. Irma Jodl looked miserable: "But it was like this night after night." She hoped that Prof. Sauerbruch would relieve her of the pain with an operation on her vertebrae. With a heavy heart, I said goodbye. Would I ever see her again?
The impression I took away from the attitude of the Berliners was so strong that I found it difficult to return to the "stage" at Lake Garda. This unreality was reinforced during the New Year's Eve celebration with the Duce's family on Isola di Garda. Everyone was under the same pressure, and a midnight polonaise through the old castle reinforced the surreal nature of the situation.
New Year's Day 1944 began with a parade of Italian militia troops in front of Mussolini. It was truly astonishing to see how much he had recovered; fresh and alert, he reviewed the parade with his characteristic proud bearing. There was no sign of the terrible tragedy he had endured. For it was precisely during those days that the fascist court in Verona had sentenced his son-in-law, Count Ciano, to death because he had voted against Mussolini in the Gran Consiglio on July 19, 1943. Ambassador Rahn flew to Hitler and explored the possibility of allowing Ciano to escape to Switzerland. Hitler refused to interfere in
internal Italian affairs. On the evening after the parade, our staff was awakened by an alarm call from the embassy in Fasano: Captain Hoppe was to deliver a letter from his daughter to the Duce, which she had left in Fasano. The content of the letter was roughly as follows:
"Duce! I have waited until today for you to show me some humanity. Now I've had enough. If Galeazzo is not with me in Switzerland within three days under the conditions I set for you in Germany, then everything I know will be used against you and the Germans in an appropriate manner. Otherwise – if we can live in peace and safety – you will never hear from me again. Edda."
Count Ciano's own plea for mercy to the Duce was suppressed by Minister Pavolini. Edda's appeal was unsuccessful, and the fascist court sentenced the former foreign minister to be shot from behind in order to "brand his treacherous behavior." I found this horrific and did not know at the time that a few months later the German People's Court and two years later the International Military Tribunal would impose a much more cruel form of death: the gallows.

7.
Friends

"Only through fulfilled finitude does our path lead to infinity."
Klaus Mann, "The Turning Point"
At the end of February 1944—the Allies had just succeeded in landing at Anzio after heavy fighting—Irma Jodl wrote to me that she was going to be operated on by Prof. Sauerbruch in Königsberg. There had been no air raids there yet, and she would be close to Alfred.
On Good Friday, Jodl called from the Führer's headquarters: "Irma is finally pain-free again, Sauerbruch is very satisfied, I just visited her, you can imagine how happy we are." On Easter Monday, a second call came; this time I could hardly understand Jodl, his voice sounded so quiet and depressed. "Imagine, on the night after the operation, Königsberg was attacked, and Irma caught pneumonia in the air-raid shelter. The doctors have little hope left. She asked about you. Could you come?"
I quickly considered my options. Tomorrow morning, Lieutenant Colonel Jandl was driving to Berchtesgaden for a meeting between Hitler and Mussolini. Perhaps I could get leave to go with him. "I'll come," I said, "but let's not give up hope."

The morning after next, after a journey by car and plane to East Prussia, I stood at Irma's sickbed. One glance told me everything, but she was still conscious. Alfred's face showed such deep shock that I was afraid of how he would get through it all. When I was alone with Irma in the room, she asked in a barely audible voice, "How are things in Italy?" This question revealed Irma's true nature
: even now, as she was about to leave this earth, her entire thoughts were focused on her husband's work. "Will you promise me you'll take care of him?" I nodded silently; it was the first time I had seen a loved one die.
Her breathing grew weaker, a doctor came, felt her pulse, and left. Alfred knelt motionless beside the dying woman, the night lamp casting the shadow of his head against the wall with the crucifix. When it was all over, I was overcome with something almost like envy as I looked into the silent face of the dead woman.
Irma's cremation took place quietly in Königsberg, with only Alfred, his adjutant, and I in attendance. On the return flight to Berlin in a He 111—my first flight in an Luftwaffe aircraft—Ambassador Hewel, Ribbentrop's liaison officer to the OKW, was also on board. I had heard that people were skeptical about this environment, but this man made a sympathetic and intelligent impression.
However, my thoughts were less focused on my surroundings than on the past, on Irma. How much I owed this woman! Where had we first met? Yes, now I remembered, in Döberitz at a Hubertus hunt. It had been my first horseback hunt, and at first, with my heart pounding, I had tried to overcome my anxiety when the unfamiliar horse kept throwing its head up and pawing the ground while we waited for the start. But once we set off, all my fears vanished. Anyone who rides knows this feeling of almost jubilant joie de vivre on horseback and in nature, of being at one with both. The hunt master was Colonel General Baron von Fritsch. I had proudly accepted the sprig of fir greenery from his hand and then gone back to my horse to pat its sweat-drenched neck.
Afterwards, riders and spectators gathered for a drink in the casino of the military training area. An orderly came and brought me a folded note: "My husband has told me so much about you. I'm a stranger here. Would you like to sit with me?" Irma Jodl approached me from the end of the table. From under high arched eyebrows, her brown eyes looked at me with shy warmth, her beautifully curved lips betraying kindness and sensitivity.
When this woman's husband, Alfred Jodl, a young captain on the general staff, reported for duty to my boss at the time, General Adam,
I had raved about him to my friend. Athletic in build, with very light eyes in his tanned face, with his calm and at the same time light movements, he looked exactly like what he really was and remained until the end of his life: a son of the mountains. With a slightly embarrassed smile that immediately conveyed his confidence, he confessed to me that he felt "utterly miserable" in the big city of Berlin. "But imagine," I had explained to my friend, "what this captain's name is: Jodl." To my ears, accustomed to North German names, this name seemed strange at the time.
As life would have it, this man with the "strange" name was to become my destiny, a destiny for which I will be grateful for the rest of my life, and I am very proud to bear this very name. Jodl and I first met on one of the annual General Staff trips, where war games were conducted under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff. The trip took us to Reichenhall, and it was my first encounter with the high mountains. Having spent my childhood on the Pomeranian Baltic Sea coast, the sight of the mountain ranges and snowfields was an unforgettable experience for me. Jodl couldn't tell me enough about the mountains.
"Have you heard from Alfred yet?" Irma Jodl interrupted my train of thought. I said no, and when she asked me to visit her soon, I agreed. "We have no children and don't know anyone younger here in Berlin, so please come soon." This marked the beginning of a close friendship, and when the Jodls invited me to stay with them at Lake Chiemsee during a life-threatening illness in 1934, our affection, respect, and love deepened. These were my thoughts during the flight; we landed first in Berlin, then in Munich.

The urn containing Irma's ashes was buried on Fraueninsel, and now I also got to know her relatives who lived in Bavaria. The reunion with this peaceful landscape, with the Kampenwand, which I had once climbed with Alfred, seemed almost unreal to me—just as unreal as the fact that there was a liaison staff with Mussolini at Lake Garda. Alfred maintained great composure despite all the turmoil, but I knew only too well how much he had lost with this woman.

I still had two days before my return trip with Lieutenant Colonel Jandl. I took the opportunity to visit Colonel General Halder in Hohenaschau, where he had been living since his retirement in 1943. He and his wife gave me a very warm welcome. He spoke about the military situation with great openness and skepticism: "We must also be clear that after the war ends, we will be responsible for the deaths of many Russian prisoners of war."

The next day, I drove to Berchtesgaden and picked up Alfred from the "Reich Chancellery" in Bischofswiesen. This was where Minister Lammers, Field Marshal Keitel, and Jodl had their offices when Hitler was staying at the Berghof. A warm wind was blowing, the Watzmann towered dark blue against the sky streaked with long wisps of cloud, and meltwater roared beneath the hollow snow cover. We walked along meadows strewn with crocuses; it was early spring. On the slopes of the Untersberg, we sat down on a pile of wood, enjoying the spicy smell of the freshly peeled trunks. Alfred took off his cap and wiped his forehead. His face showed deep exhaustion, with deep wrinkles stretching from his nose to his mouth. We hadn't spoken a word yet. "Don't you want to tell me about the early days?" I asked. "I know everything about you three since we've known each other, but hardly anything about before that." He stubbed out his cigarette on the trunk and lit a new one. Hesitant at first, but soon lost in his memories, he began to tell his story. It was forgotten that not far from here, Hitler and Mussolini were conferring with each other, bent over maps of the whole of Europe.

"When I was born in Würzburg in 1890, my father was a captain and battery commander in the 22nd Bavarian Field Artillery Regiment. He was the third of six children in a family of civil servants from Munich, who originally came from Tyrol and had worked their way up from very modest circumstances. However, the heavy Bavarian blood that gives us Jodls our calmness and strong nerves was mixed with the lighter Franconian blood from my grandmother's family."

"And your mother?" I asked.

Alfred's face became very thoughtful. "I'm going to tell you something that only the closest family knows: My father could only marry my mother when he resigned as an officer; according to the regulations at the time, she did not have the

the background and wealth required of an officer's wife. As a little boy, I noticed how much my father, whom I hold in high esteem, suffered from leaving his beloved profession when he suddenly burst into tears while listening to a military band at the Chinese Tower."

"Did your parents only have you two boys?"

"No, there were actually five of us; three little sisters died. And it was only from the age of eight that I took my father's name; until then, I had my mother's, Baumgärtl."

I sensed how good it was for him to talk, and after a moment of silence, I said, "And what was your mother like?"

Now Alfred laughed. "She was different from her father. Robust and full of life, she complemented the Jodl family's deliberateness perfectly. She came from a mill near Vilshofen, from a farming family that had lived there for as long as church records had existed. We found all this out from the family tree. She was a perfect housewife, with an enormous capacity for work. Deeply religious and devout, she nevertheless hardly ever went to church. She always remained a woman of the people, to whom she was inwardly attached and with whom she felt more comfortable than in the upper classes. She knew the worries and sufferings of those around her, and no beggar ever left her doorstep without a gift. She hated all lazy people, whom she fearlessly and openly reproached for their faults. Thus, my younger brother Ferdinand and I were subjected to strict discipline, for which we are infinitely grateful. We owe my father something quite different: he was an enthusiastic soldier with a keen sense of logic and

justice. Open-minded in his thinking, he rejected all dogmatic ties to the church. Above all, the free-thinking religious views of my uncle Friedrich Jodl in Vienna, who was a professor of philosophy there, had a strong influence on his attitude—and later on mine as well. Another factor that played a role for me was that, as a young boy, I had been offended by a young clergyman, and later I left the church. My aunts, on the other hand—one of whom was even a mother superior—retained the strict Catholic faith of their parents' home."
Alfred's face had relaxed completely as he spoke, and I felt as if I was seeing the person I had once roamed the mountains of Chiemgau with many years ago. "Where did you go to school in your early years? In Würzburg?"
"No. We only lived there until I was five. But I still remember that time very clearly. We lived in the house of the Adlers, a Jewish family, where my father also had his stable. More than once, I was taken away from the riding horse, which I was always drawn to. From the age of five to nine, we lived in Landau. In 1899, we moved to Munich, where I first attended the Luisenschule and later the Theresiengymnasium."
"I think you were a cadet?"
"Just wait," said Alfred, lighting another cigarette. "I passed the entrance exam in 1903, when I was 13 years old, before you were even born."
"Did you like being a cadet?"
"Oh yes! I quickly got used to the strict discipline; we were used to that at home. But I soon enjoyed gymnastics and sports so much that I had to repeat the fourth grade. That became a turning point in my life. Not only was I ashamed, but I also found myself in a much higher-quality atmosphere in the new class. I soon became so good at physics, German, history, and mathematics that I passed my high school diploma as one of the best in my class. This was the only way I was able to join the 4th Bavarian Field Artillery Regiment in Augsburg as an ensign, as the artillery in Bavaria was reserved for only the best high school graduates from the cadet corps. I owe a lot to this time and approached the task of training German youth to be soldiers with joy and self-confidence. However, we were never involved in politics in the corps, and I had no idea of the threatening clouds gathering on the political horizon. At that time, youth and freedom lay before me like peaks in the morning sun."
"And then you met Irma. In Augsburg?"
"Yes," he said, standing up and pacing back and forth a few steps with his head bowed, then sitting down again. "Then I met Irma, that was in 1910. I was the only ensign the regiment had received, and I didn't know anyone. Until then, I had spent my free time with my friend Rudi Konrad in the mountains and knew most of the peaks of the Eastern Limestone Alps. I felt at home there, but here in the city I felt very lonely and abandoned at first. I had to get by on my ensign's salary, which meant living very frugally. I am proud to say that I never ran up a penny of debt
. That's why I mostly stayed alone in my room in the barracks, got myself some bread and eggs, lit the kerosene lamp, and read near the stove. But in October, under the leadership of the regimental adjutant, the visiting tour began, Sunday after Sunday. Soon the effect became apparent: I was invited and thus entered a world previously unknown to me, the homes of the wealthy citizens of Augsburg. Since I liked to dance and preferred talking to girls rather than my comrades, I soon felt very comfortable. One of the first invitations took me to my uncle Ferdinand Jodl, the regimental commander. You know, he's the one with the house on Lake Chiemsee. You met him and his wife, née Haushofer, when you were here.
"Yes, I remember, it was the beautiful house near Gstadt, with the terrace right on the lake."
"Right. So imagine, I'm a guest at Uncle Ferdinand's, dinner has already begun, when the door opens and Countess Irma Bullion enters. And immediately I felt my heart pounding. Lively and articulate, she apologized that her carriage had not arrived on time. I knew that she was the eldest daughter of my father's cadet corps commander, who had probably asked the Bullions to take care of me a little. It was the first time I had ever met a woman like her. After all, what did I know about women at that point?"

As he said the last words, Alfred looked at me, and a smile crossed his face. "Good girls or wild bees. But nothing more. This woman was from another world. She wasn't making conversation, she was looking for a person. She asked about my mountain tours, my goals and dreams, and then she invited me to a dance lesson at her parents' house. Soon, instead of dancing, I was sitting in the countess's small salon, and we talked and talked. It didn't take long before she called me 'my little flag'. You know the cigarette case with the engraving, right?" He took it out of his pocket and opened it.
"Go on," I asked.
"We couldn't get away from each other," Alfred continued. "But first there was a long separation; at her parents' request, Irma went to Sacre Coeur in England to teach. During this time, we wrote to each other twice; I had been transferred to the military academy in Munich. In the fall, I returned to Augsburg as a cadet. When I visited Caroli-
, Irma was standing in front of the large cupboard taking out plates. And without breaking anything, we embraced each other wordlessly. I told her that I would soon become a lieutenant. I hadn't given it any thought, let alone thought about marriage. I simply enjoyed the love of this mature woman, who was five years older than me, as a gift from heaven. She was also smarter than me and thought it would be better to separate. So I took courage and asked if we could get married. She said her father would probably not allow it. There is a letter from my uncle Ferdinand to the old Count Bullion in which he strongly advises against the marriage, saying that I am too young to commit myself. Well, the following Sunday I sat opposite the old count, who was kindly to me but very matter-of-fact. He explained to me that everything spoke against the marriage—the age difference, the uncertainty of my career, the financial difficulties. I left him with little hope. Then I asked my father for help, and two days later I received a telegram: "Expect you for lunch. Count Bullion." We got engaged that same day, and shortly thereafter, when I became a lieutenant, we were married."
Alfred looked at his watch and stood up. "High time."
We walked back along the same path beside the roaring stream to the Reich Chancellery.
"Well, then the First World War came," Alfred resumed his story, "and my luck remained with me. My battery was shot to pieces during the advance, I was wounded in the thigh by shrapnel, but I was back at the front in December and was then appointed adjutant to the artillery commander of the 8th Bavarian Infantry Division."
"And after the war? Did you ever consider taking up another profession?"
"Yes, I thought about studying medicine. But I didn't have the means, and then I realized that I had to remain an officer. Every day, at political meetings, on the street, and in the barracks, I saw clearly that without state authority, there can be no democracy. The four and a half years at the front had changed me a lot. I believed that the causes of the collapse lay mainly in two points: the unresolved social and state problems of the German states
. The sovereignty of the German states seemed dangerous to me, and I saw the struggle between the parties, especially the conservatives and the socialists, as the reason for the division of the people. There was no unified leadership. All this made me view the Ebert government with hope; I believed it could succeed in achieving a tolerable peace in a unified empire. These revolutionary ideas led to many heated arguments with my superiors in the field and at home with my father-in-law, who considered the revolution a crime."
"Were you immediately accepted into the 100,000-strong army, i.e., the Reichswehr?"
"Yes, as early as 1919. First I joined the mountain artillery in Landsberg, then in 1920 the training courses for general staff officers began; at that time they were still called Führer's assistants. Adam and Hierl were my teachers, and I owe my transfer to Berlin to Adam. Well, and from then on, you know the rest."
We had reached the garden of the Reich Chancellery. Alfred put on his cap, and it slid over his previously relaxed face like a curtain, making it stern and rigid in its solitude. "It's high time!" We parted without a word, but as I turned around, I saw him waving and went back.

"Thanks for coming," he said over the garden fence. "And it did me so much good to talk about all this."
We both had tears in our eyes.
I was staying at the Berchtesgadener Hof, and as I sat in the dining room that evening, I looked around curiously. "What are you doing here?" a voice greeted me. "Did you come with the Duce?" It was General Baron von B., Jodl's army staff officer, whom I knew from the War Ministry. I was glad to have company; there was so much to ask, my homeland felt like a foreign country to me. Eventually, we got to talking about Jodl himself. "Why do you think the Führer kept Jodl after the Winniza crisis?" I asked B.
"That's hard to say; there are certainly various reasons. He has repeatedly rejected Jodl's requests to resign, probably because he doesn't like to see new faces around him. But the Führer also knows what he has in Jodl: a sober, intelligent expert who keeps his distance from party cliques and lives only for his work, without caring about promotion or awards. In addition
, Jodl is pretty much the only one here who tells the Führer what he thinks, often with Bavarian bluntness. But he does it very skillfully, not getting stubborn, but waiting for the right moment to bring up an issue again. I always have the impression that the Führer is also attracted to Jodl because he sees him more as a man of the people; he doesn't like aristocratic Prussians. And finally, the Führer also knows that Jodl will loyally carry out an order if his objections have been rejected."
"Is Jodl, for his part, open to discussion?"
B. cleaned his monocle and smiled. "If you can justify your own point of view well in the event of a disagreement, then absolutely. If that's not the case, he can become quite sarcastic, so you have to come to terms with him, so to speak."
"Do you consider him ambitious?"
"Only for the cause, hardly for himself," said B. "Otherwise, he certainly wouldn't have turned down the post of Chief of the General Staff of the Air Force, which was offered to him twice in 1938. I clearly remember how he came to see me at the time; he had only one wish, to get a mountain division. And he would probably be better off today as an army leader than here."
"Why?"
"Because Colonel General Jodl, probably in clear recognition of his own limitations, has isolated himself from the big questions of overall warfare in a way that is inappropriate for his position and has confined himself more to operational warfare. And this interference by the supreme leaders forces the front commanders to take locally inappropriate measures, which they can sometimes only avoid by spreading false reports; this must lead to a decline in leadership morale."
"But isn't that also due to . . . ?" I looked around.
B. understood immediately. "Of course. And I don't know of anyone else who would be as willing as Jodl to take on the role of honest mediator between the Führer and the front commanders so selflessly."
"Isn't there also a lot of problems with the division of the theaters of war since the Führer became commander-in-chief of the army?"
8. He nodded. "Certainly. From around 1942 onwards, the Führer completely relieved the Wehrmacht leadership completely relieved of responsibility for warfare on the Eastern Front. After all, he could hardly accept orders from Jodl in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the army. Jodl did not resist this unfortunate development sufficiently; perhaps he was also glad to have nothing to do with the East. And so it came about that the central office, which was actually supposed to coordinate the three branches of the Wehrmacht, became a command staff for the so-called OKW theaters of war."(16)
B. counted on his fingers: "Finland, Norway, France, the Balkans, Italy, and earlier also Africa. By the way, how are things with you, I mean in terms of morale?"
"Oh," I said, "you know the military situation, and you'd better not ask me about anything else! The Duce's headquarters feels like a dazzling soap bubble that could burst at any moment; I feel like an impostor. I want to request a transfer. Can't you use someone?"

B. waved me off. "God forbid you should come to this place! If you only knew... I hope every day to be transferred to the front."
I looked around. Small groups of officers were sitting at tables everywhere, some in lively conversation with flight captain Hanna Reitsch, who wore her EK I on her blue jacket. With bored routine, the waiters cut out the respective sections for meat, fat, etc. from the food ration cards. I leaned forward: "And him?"
B. looked around first, then said quietly: "An almost astonishing instinctive sensitivity enabled successes in the past that none of us thought possible. His operational instinct also often struck me. That worked well as long as we had superior resources at our disposal, which he had activated at the time. But that is long gone. Instead of energy, decisiveness, and inventiveness, we now have to contend with mistrust, injustice, and inflexibility on a daily basis. The mistrust is not even that surprising, because everyone on his staff, right down to the photographer, feels called upon to report negatively on the Wehrmacht."
"But how on earth is this supposed to continue?"
B. shrugged his shoulders. "He slid into the world war because not everything had been thought through properly. What commander goes
take on the England-France coalition without having a specific goal in mind? The fact that we had no plan after the Polish campaign, that we stood on the Channel coast without having made any further plans, is just as much a criterion as the lack of cooperation within the Tripartite Pact. But there are much worse things. How much blood was unnecessarily shed in the East, oh . . . if you only knew . . ."
An orderly made his way to our table. "General, the Reich Chancellery is requesting you. Colonel General Jodl is on the line."
"Give my regards to Jodl," I asked Buttlar as we said goodbye. When paying, a 1,000 lire note fell out of my pocket and the waiter picked it up. "Oh, Italian money!" he exclaimed. "Are you part of the Duce's staff?" "Yes." For a brief second, I felt important. But... if he only knew...
8.
July 20, 1944
"Above all else, be true to yourself."
William Shakespeare, Hamlet
Two months had passed, and Rome had already fallen into the hands of the Allies. On the morning of June 6, 1944, news came of an Allied landing in Normandy. It was not yet known whether this was a large-scale landing. Never before had the task of listening to enemy radio broadcasts been so exciting: first the muffled drumbeats—the first bars of the Eroica—then incomprehensible instructions in French and English with numbers, weather reports, and more incomprehensible sentences. The officers on our staff were confident. "Rommel won't let them land, and then maybe we can come to a draw." After a few days, however, the incoming telegrams with the situation reports made it clear that this was indeed an invasion and that the Allies had gained a firm foothold, thanks above all to their overwhelming air superiority. An awkward silence ensued.
For the Italians on the Duce's staff, the events in France did not seem as significant as what was happening at home. Their thoughts were mainly focused on the new Italian divisions, the symbol of the newly formed regime. Four divisions were formed and trained in Germany from volunteers and former "Hiwis," the auxiliary volunteers. During his first inspection of the "San Marco" division, Mussolini was greeted with thunderous cheers. In a fiery speech, he called on the soldiers to restore Italy's honor, and after the flag was handed over, they embraced and kissed him with wild enthusiasm.
On July 20, 1944, the Duce was scheduled to meet with Hitler. For us, that meant quiet days that gave us time to go boating after work. I let the boat drift and lost myself in thought. The day before yesterday, I had received a positive response from General Blumentritt, the chief of staff, to my request to the Commander-in-Chief West for a position at a local office. On the same day, however, a letter

arrived from Jodl. He asked me to become his wife after the year of mourning and to take over his household in Berlin in the fall.

There was never a moment of doubt in my mind about which path I should take. Over the many years I had known him, I had grown to love and respect Jodl more and more, both as a person and as a man. I knew his idiosyncrasies, the many, sometimes only apparent contradictions that made him so endearing to me, apart from his attractive appearance: his reserve toward strangers, which at times bordered on brusqueness; his warmth and humorous kindness toward friends; his understanding and open-mindedness toward young people; his phlegmatic composure in letting things come to him and, at the same time, his lightning-fast grasp of complex situations. His sensitivity to the little things in everyday life and his calm composure when making big decisions, his modesty and athletic toughness towards himself combined with a pronounced outward neatness, his aversion as a nature-loving soldier to the limelight, and at the same time his chivalry towards women, with a shy yet self-confident charm. And finally, the wisdom and human understanding that provided a reasoned answer to every question. But what I admired most about him was the straightforwardness, the unconditional truthfulness of his character, his sense of justice, and his dedication to his profession in the sense of a calling. His departure from the church did not create any barriers between us. I respected his reasons and knew that we were of one mind on the ultimate questions.

Lost in these thoughts, I drifted out onto Lake Garda in a boat in the evening and arrived late at the dining room of the Hotel Nasi. As I walked through the non-commissioned officers' room, I noticed a certain uneasiness, and when I entered our dining room, I was met with strangely tense faces. Had there been a new invasion? My friend Christa v. d. Bussche anticipated my question: "A bomb exploded in the Führer's

headquarters without hitting the Führer. Some officers have been killed, but Jodl is alive." I felt as if someone had hit me on the head. At first, gratitude that Jodl was alive outweighed all other feelings. Then I noticed how silent everyone was. I had the vague feeling that almost everyone at our table was thinking along the same lines: Could the success of the assassination attempt—for that's what it must have been—have opened up new possibilities? Then a debate began as to whether the whole thing might be a deliberate piece of propaganda. But at around 9 p.m., the radio announced that Hitler himself would speak after midnight. A long wait, with new discussions breaking out again and again. Our Sonderführer Will-Werner von Bergen said that it must have been prepared well in advance. Did he know more? Then music came on the radio, the Badenweiler March. And now Hitler's unmistakable voice—more hoarse than usual, but with fanatical willpower:

"... I myself am completely unharmed ... I take all this as confirmation of the mission of providence ... a very small and at the same time criminally stupid clique of officers hatched the plot. ...

The subsequent speeches by Göring and Dönitz passed me by. When Hitler mentioned the name of Count Stauffenberg, I was deeply shaken. I remembered our conversation in Rome, where he had argued with me in bitter and passionate words that any continuation of the war was pointless. But hadn't Stauffenberg himself once ridden in front of his squadron as a lieutenant with the swastika flag, dismissing his friends' concerns: "One must understand a popular movement." What path of suffering must this officer have gone through to bring himself not only to break his oath, but also to commit assassination, to kill his own comrades? What an almost unbridgeable rift must this act have opened up in the officer corps, and beyond that, in the whole of Germany? If only we knew more! Enough to be sure that this desperate act was the only right thing to do! In earlier years, I would probably have believed what Hitler said about "providence," but today? Perhaps it was our people's destiny to drink the cup to the dregs. Oh, if only we knew someone who could show us the right way out of this thicket! All night long I hoped for a call from Jodl, but in vain. Finally, at dawn the next day, his call came from the Führer's headquarters. I asked if he was injured.

"Oh, it's nothing, just my hair is burned off, and I can hardly hear you because my eardrums are burst. What do you say?"

I clearly sensed the intention behind his trivializing words and had the feeling that hundreds of ears were listening in on the conversation. There was a pause, then I heard Alfred say:
"Beck is dead."
I couldn't respond.
"Beck is dead," Alfred repeated, and I sensed a deep emotion in his voice. And then again, clearly and firmly: "He shot himself."
A strange impulse made me ask about Tresckow.
"Tresckow?" said Alfred, as if startled. "What makes you think that? He was killed yesterday while on patrol."
My God, Beck dead, Tresckow dead! I immediately realized that the deaths of these two men were connected to the assassination attempt. And in the midst of my grief for these two beloved people and the tremendous tension created by the eavesdropping ears listening to the conversation, I suddenly thought of how desperate and deeply affected Alfred himself would be. "We belong together now more than ever," I said. This time there was no pause.
"Thank you," came his warm, calm voice, and now the Alps, Bohemia, and Poland no longer lay between us. "I need you very much now, you know that?"
Yes, I knew.
Unable to bear the walls around me, I left the house and searched in the pale twilight for the path that led up the mountain. When a boulder in front of a small chapel blocked my way, I sat down, exhausted. My thoughts raced back and forth, over the when, how, where, and why of the assassination. And suddenly, like a flash of lightning, a sentence from a letter I had received from Beck a few days earlier in response to my birthday wishes came to mind: "Everything is in flux, we must wait and see how everything turns out." I hadn't attached any particular significance to these words, but now I understood their deeper meaning. Wouldn't it be better to destroy the letter? I climbed down the mountain.
The flame ran along the edge of the letter, eating into the paper with a bluish rim, ashes falling to the ground. I felt as if I had to keep vigil that night for the two people who had meant so much to me, Beck and Tresckow. The flame seemed to me like a symbol of their lives.
My thoughts wandered back more than ten years, to the time when I had worked as a secretary in Beck's office during his entire tenure as Chief of the General Staff. How vividly his figure stood before me, filling me as a young person with reverential awe and admiration; his integrity and sovereignty, his strength in the face of loneliness, which was beyond all vanity, his human kindness, but at the same time his strict demands on his subordinates. Even outwardly, I had been unable to escape his influence. When, in 1935, foreign military attachés reported to a German Chief of Staff for the first time since the Treaty of Versailles had previously only allowed the title "Chief of the Troop Office," I heard the Polish colonel whisper to his British comrade: "C'est Moltke lui-même." The comparison was obvious. Beck was also both a soldier and a philosopher, and the noble severity of his head, with its high forehead and narrow lips, bore a striking resemblance to the great commander, whose life-size portrait hung in Beck's study. His brown eyes were deeply set beneath his brow, their compelling seriousness rarely giving way to a smile, but when it did, it lit up his entire face from within.
Minor details came back to me. When the chief of staff arrived for work, he had already been on a long ride, during which he sometimes ran alongside his horse as training. He did not leave his desk until late in the evening. He only attended social engagements if he felt obliged to do so by his office. Thinking about this, I remembered how I had once placed an invitation to a Greta Garbo premiere on his desk. "Who is Greta Garbo?" the unworldly philosopher had asked me with a subtle smile, looking over the rim of his glasses. Unapproachable at work and knowing no time limits in his strict sense of duty, Beck was a charming host in his home, together with his quiet and delicate daughter, and served his guests exquisite wines and dishes. Then he liked to talk about the old days in the General Staff, as his thinking was very much rooted in the past. In the past? That was only partly true. My thoughts went back to around 1934, when the SA was striving to gain the upper hand over the Wehrmacht. Wasn't it Beck

who, as commander of the Ulm Artillery Regiment No. 6, had defended the stance of the three young Reichswehr officers who had professed their allegiance to National Socialism? In the days of the Röhm Putsch, Lieutenant Ludin, one of these three officers, had visited Beck almost daily to inform him about the situation with the SA. I clearly remember how, on the eve of June 30, 1934—the War Ministry was surrounded by barbed wire at the time and the tension was immense—Beck sent me to the department heads of the General Staff with a note he had written by hand for them to sign: "Keep your pistol handy in your drawer." But then there was his deep consternation after the assassination of General von Schleicher, the shaking of his head and the profound seriousness with which he returned to the oath of allegiance to Hitler. Yet what pride had sounded in Beck's words when the War Academy was reestablished, and with what dedication he had promoted the expansion of the General Staff, which had grown from four to eleven departments in a short time.

Then, in 1936: the invasion of two battalions into the demilitarized zone, the first public breach of the Treaty of Versailles; no reaction from the Western powers. 1937: the first maneuvers of the three branches of the Wehrmacht, the struggle for leadership. Although Beck had initially resisted the loss of the army's supremacy—in Hindenburg's time, the chief of staff was still the military-political advisor to the head of state—it was essentially moral reasons that had prompted Beck to resign after the Fritsch crisis, the annexation of Austria, and the subsequent Sudeten crisis. At the time, I knew nothing of his futile appeal to the commanders-in-chief, but I still had a clear memory of August 27, 1938, when, overcome with emotion, I struggled to copy his handwritten farewell speech to the department heads. In it, he did not go into the immediate reasons for his resignation, but merely stated in the introduction that in the struggle for the independence of the General Staff, circumstances had been stronger than himself. Then came an urgent

warning to his subordinates: the qualities for which the German General Staff was praised were only the prerequisite for becoming a member of it. His goal had been to develop qualities that, in view of the threatening increase in standardization, were necessary to qualify as a high-ranking military leader: strength of character, moral courage, and the ability to form one's own independent judgment.

When Beck left his study, the site of five years of incessant work, his face was deathly pale, but with a serene, almost unearthly expression. It was an extraordinary experience for me to see a man lay down his life's work for the sake of his conscience. However, the fact that this man continued to serve as a soldier in the weeks that followed, during the Sudeten crisis and the resulting political tension, and took command of an army on the Siegfried Line, seemed to me then, as it does now, to be of fundamental importance. "Mutiny and revolution are words that do not exist in the lexicon of a German soldier," Beck had said during the Fritsch crisis. Even for this far-sighted personality, it took six years of inner turmoil before he could bring himself to take the last resort of assassination.

It had been my pride to work under this man, who had expressed his "unrestricted trust" in me in a reference. During all the years of the war, I had never let even the shortest vacation pass without visiting the colonel general in his small villa on Goethestraße in Lichterfelde. My inner understanding and admiration had grown over the years, even though it often seemed to me that his philosophical detachment and sensitivity lacked the necessary strength to assert himself in this era of dictatorship. But that was a mistake; now he had proven through his actions that he did possess this strength.

Our conversations always lingered with me for a long time. On the role of technology, he once said, "Only when we humans subordinate technology to higher powers and make it usable will we become its masters." On another occasion, he criticized materialism, which had never been as widespread as in the Third Reich. Still caught up in my idealistic vision, I had disputed this and reminded him of the achievements of our soldiers and the unconditional willingness of our people to make sacrifices. "I know with what idealism so many of your

generation approach their tasks," Beck had said with his kindly smile. "But have you ever thought about how materialistic the goals are for which so many sacrifices are made?" I didn't really want to admit it at the time, but the words stuck with me and became a seed of realization.

In April of this year, after Irma's death, I visited Beck for the last time and found him still very frail after a serious operation and unusually agitated. He criticized the leadership as unreserved, while he judged that of the Russians to be excellent. From his sharpest criticism of Hitler's leadership, he moved on to Napoleon, a topic on which he remained for almost an hour. "There are undoubtedly many parallels, but at least this dictator was a master of his craft." Then later, very quietly, tilting his head back with a characteristic movement and gazing into the distance: "Poor, poor Germany!"
That was the last time I saw him, and now he was dead—thank God, I did not yet know about the undignified circumstances of his failed suicide attempt and the coup de grâce administered by a sergeant—and his sacrifice had been in vain. In vain? That was not yet apparent—the death of such a man was bound to have an impact.
The shock, the inner doubts about the assassination—the pros and cons—all of that resonated for a long time, and probably in all of us. What this action by the officers meant to Alfred was revealed to me in a letter I received shortly thereafter:
"The assassination did not shake my nerves, but something inside me has been broken that I do not know if it will ever heal. For me, there is no longer an officer corps beyond my closest confidants. When I learned who the perpetrator was, I wished it had torn me apart. I seriously considered whether I could still wear this uniform."
My speculation that the harshness of this letter might be a kind of security measure was later confirmed by a letter from General von Wedel, the head of the propaganda department. According to this letter, Jodl had expressed no doubt to him the following day about the ethical motives of the assassins.
Over the next few weeks, we learned little about the assassination attempt at Duce headquarters; only rumors of other
names. Gradually, it became clear that the circle of rebels was much larger than previously assumed. The appeal by the Chief of the General Staff, Colonel General Guderian, indirectly confirmed how heavily the General Staff was involved in the assassination attempt.17 From a second letter from Jodl, I gathered that he was particularly shaken by the involvement of young recruits in the General Staff. And I also sensed how this in particular left its mark on him. In a study written later, Jodl came to the conclusion that the bitter path to the end was the better one for Germany: "No false legend can be formed anymore."
In September, I requested leave to take care of the move to Berlin and look for a new job. To my delight, Alfred was able to come for a day, but I knew that this reunion would be overshadowed by recent events. When Alfred arrived in Dahlem late in the evening by plane from the "Wolf's Lair," I was deeply shocked. His upright posture and light gait were unchanged, but there was a stiffness in his features that made him seem strange to me at first. This was probably partly due to the fact that his features were more sharply defined because his hair had been burned off by the explosion of the bomb, but that was not the only reason. His face expressed such despair and loneliness that it touched my heart. For the first time, I became truly aware of how heavily this man was burdened by his responsibilities and, presumably, by a conflict that was tearing him apart.
Late in the evening, we took a long walk through the Grunewald forest, at first in silence, then gradually relaxing and discussing the things that moved us deeply. It was only now that I learned the tragic details of Beck's fate, of his failed attempt to take his own life, and of Fromm's order to give him the coup de grâce. Alfred condemned the assassination attempt in the strongest terms, perhaps because he sensed my doubts. What effect would the rebels have expected from the enemy, he asked me, stopping excitedly. "Haven't you read what Churchill said and how the entire world press reacted?" I knew little; at Duce headquarters, we lived as if on an island. "Well, listen: it doesn't matter who murders whom, these are gangster antics that you wouldn't normally expect from a corps of officers . That's what Churchill said, and the Americans too." I was hearing this for the first time, and it gave me pause. "Tell me how you experienced it yourself," I asked. "That's easy to tell. Listen: Heusinger was giving his presentation. I arrived later and noticed that neither Göring nor Himmler were there,

which gave me hope for a short meeting. It often took hours. I squeezed in between Keitel and the Führer to look at the map. At that moment, I lost consciousness without noticing anything beforehand. When I came to, my head was burning like fire, and I thought a lamp had fallen on my head. Still lying on the floor, I saw small yellow flames running along the floor around me. It must have been an explosion, I thought. I looked around; it was a gruesome sight. In one corner, two officers were lifting a lifeless body. I got up, mechanically searched for my cap in the anteroom, and staggered outside. My first glance fell on the Führer, whom Keitel carefully supported and led to his bunker. Then I saw Fellgiebel approaching the Führer and congratulating him." "Fellgiebel?" I interrupted, "he was one of the assassins." "That's the thing," said Alfred, "that still puzzles me today. He came and congratulated him, even though he knew that Stauffenberg had flown to Berlin believing that the Führer was dead. But listen further! The people running around on the lawn looked like figures from the underworld, with fiery red and black faces, bloodshot eyes, and hair standing on end like spikes. The remains of their uniforms fluttered around them like pennants; it looked wild. I felt myself all over; everything was intact, only my head felt as if boiling water had been poured over it. Again and again I tried to think clearly, but everything kept getting mixed up. In a daze, I saw someone hoisting himself up at the window: Colonel Brandt. We helped him; one of his feet was almost torn off. "There's no helping him," he said calmly. You know that the poor guy died soon after that." I nodded. "I was now in control of my thoughts again," Alfred continued. "I searched the barracks for the documents for my lecture, but only found my blood-stained notebook. When I went to inquire about the Führer, I saw Fellgiebel standing in front of his bunker. 'Yes, yes,' I heard him say as if from afar, 'that's what happens when you get so close.'"

behind the front lines.' 'No,' I replied angrily, 'that's what happens when headquarters is a construction site!' " 'So you assumed it was a foreign worker?' I asked. 'Yes,' said Alfred, "as far as I could think clearly. I felt as if thousands of people were talking to me and I couldn't keep my bearings. Incidentally, it's amazing how well Keitel got away with it and what initiative he developed. He received Mussolini, telephoned all the commanders-in-chief and revoked the 'Valkyrie' orders that Beck and Olbricht had issued. If Keitel had been seriously injured, who knows how the situation in Berlin would have developed." We were now on our way home again, and I was thinking about how I could bring up something with Alfred that was very close to my heart but was related to July 20. Immediately upon my arrival in Berlin, Ada, the first wife of Privy Councilor Professor Sauerbruch, had asked me to meet her at Wannsee station, saying she needed to speak to me urgently. To my horror, I learned that her son Peter, one of Stauffenberg's closest friends, was in Gestapo custody. I had known Peter Sauerbruch since we worked together on Halder's staff. We had kept in touch by letter throughout the war, and I was deeply pleased that he had miraculously escaped the hell of Stalingrad. I thought very highly of this young general staff officer, of his character and human qualities, his knowledge and professional skills.

"It seems to me that you still have something on your mind?" Alfred asked, reading my thoughts. Relieved, I stopped. "Listen," I said, "you have to help someone who deserves it more than almost anyone else," and I explained the situation. Alfred, who felt indebted to the old privy councilor because of Irma's operation and had also heard good things about Peter, promised to do his best. He was successful. Three months later, Lieutenant Colonel Sauerbruch, who had since been released, told me how Kaltenbrunner had personally interrogated him for three hours and then dismissed him with the words: "You owe your release solely to the intercession of Colonel General Jodl."

In the afternoon, Alfred and I went to the Charité hospital to reassure Professor Sauerbruch and thank him for all the help he had given Irma. After a short wait, the privy councilor invited us in and greeted us with his characteristic liveliness and

warmth. You could see from his face the difficult time he had been through—almost his entire circle of friends from the "Wednesday Society" had fallen victim to the People's Court: Olbricht, Popitz, Planck, and others.

"On the eve of the assassination attempt, Beck and I were invited to Olbricht's apartment," Saueibruch told us. "Beck was particularly cordial to me. He suddenly took me by the arm, led me into the next room, and said, 'Herr Geheimrat, you belong to humanity. And that's why you have to wait here a little while we discuss something in the next room.' He didn't want me to be implicated."
I was pleased to see how, from the very beginning of the conversation, an immediate warm rapport developed between these two men, the surgeon and the officer. When we left after a conversation lasting almost two hours, Alfred said casually, "By the way, I also spoke to Himmler on your behalf." "Himmler!?" exclaimed the professor, taken aback. "Why and how?" "Well," said Alfred with a smile, "I thought it couldn't hurt, and after you told us about Beck, I'm glad I did."
The privy councilor looked at me through his glasses with his very bright, lively eyes and put his hand on my shoulder. "I like him!" he exclaimed in his carefree manner. "He's not a Nazi general, he's still old school."
Old school? Yes and no. On the way back to Italy, Sauerbruch's words ran through my mind, and I recalled what Jodl had told me after Irma's death: How, after the defeat in World War I, his comrades had called him a "revolutionary" and how, even as a young first lieutenant, he had already believed that the problems of a lost war and growing industrialization could only be solved by uniting the socialist working class with the national bourgeoisie. With this attitude, shouldn't the NSDAP's program have fallen on receptive ground? However, Jodl was initially opposed to Hitler. I witnessed this myself: In 1933, after the state ceremony in the Potsdam Garrison Church, I enthusiastically described the meeting between Hitler and Hindenburg to my friend Ruth von Werner in the War Ministry casino
, a young major general staff officer, Jodl, called out a little mockingly from the next table: "Don't fall for this charlatan."
I hardly knew this major at the time, but his assessment by the head of the Troop Office, General Adam, had made me curious about him: "A sober, clear head, a warm heart, an iron will, a man of the future."
While Beck's initial approval had turned into increasing criticism and finally into the sharpest rejection, the opposite development took place in Jodl: "The merging of the states into a single Reich, the overcoming of class differences, the extension of privileges to the working class, and ultimately the dissolution of the bonds of the Treaty of Versailles in a peaceful atmosphere with England and France secured Hitler the sympathy of the people," Jodl later wrote about his attitude. "I professed my allegiance to the new state not only through my oath, but also joyfully and inwardly, when I saw how, as if by magic, all the hardship and turmoil of the previous period had been eliminated and, for a revolution, a great deal of discipline had initially been shown." At that time, Jodl was just one of millions who approved of Hitler because he had regained Germany's equality among the great powers. No one other than Churchill respected Hitler at the time, albeit with reservations:
"It is a crime to despair. We must learn to find sources of future strength in misfortune. Our leadership must have at least a little of the spirit of that German private who, when everything around him had fallen into ruins, when Germany seemed to be plunged into chaos for all time, did not hesitate to march against the mighty battle line of the victorious nations and has already defeated them so decisively. The hour demands not despair, but courage and resistance." And: "We cannot say whether Hitler will be the man who will once again trigger a new world war – or whether he will go down in history as the man who restored honor and peace of mind to the great German nation and integrated it calmly, helpfully, and strongly into the European family."
After three years of service as group leader in the Operations Department, Jodl was appointed head of the National Defense Department in the
newly created Wehrmacht Office, the predecessor of the later WFST (†††). This department was responsible for handling operational deployment in accordance with the guidelines of the political leadership and for organizing the entire Wehrmacht. None other than General Beck had recommended Jodl for this post at the time, in the hope that this capable general staff officer of the army would secure

the primacy of his part of the Wehrmacht. Things turned out differently. After a short period in his new post, Jodl became convinced of the absolute necessity of central control of the three equal branches of the Wehrmacht, purely for military reasons, with domestic political considerations taking a back seat, and he firmly defended this view to his former boss. "He (Jodl) was perhaps the only army officer in the OKW who had fully embraced the concept of 'Wehrmacht leadership' from the outset and acted accordingly," wrote Grand Admiral Raeder years later in his Moscow memoirs.

Although the profound differences of opinion about the top-level structure between the Wehrmacht and Army leadership were essentially played out at the level of the heads of office, i.e., between Beck and Reichenau, they unfortunately did not remain without repercussions on the personal relationship between Beck and Jodl. While Beck had welcomed Jodl as a guest with particular warmth during a General Staff trip in 1937, the following years saw a growing estrangement between the two men. I only understood the deeper connections much later: Jodl's purely military, completely apolitical thinking did not raise the questions that were decisive for the more far-sighted Chief of the General Staff when considering the organization of the top echelons of the Wehrmacht and the army: questions of morale and the unobjectionable policies of the Supreme Commander Hitler.

Jodl regarded the Munich Conference as a great foreign policy success for Hitler. His diary entries reflect his mood at the time:

"This way of doing politics is new to Europe. If there was a way to prevent a European war, it was this speech and this determination . . . The genius of the Führer and his determination to avoid even a world war

have once again won the victory without the use of force being necessary."18

These contradictory words, uttered in enthusiasm and relief at a time when Jodl did not yet know Hitler personally but was dependent on information from Blomberg and Keitel, were later to be held against him in court as "criminal."

Jodl had been appointed Artillery Commander 44 in Vienna in October 1938 and had witnessed the occupation of the Sudetenland with his troops. "I feel sorry for the disarmed Czechs; they remind me of 1918," he wrote to me at the time. "I comforted the commander after the surrender of arms." Later, in Nuremberg, he described the occupation of Czechoslovakia to the American psychologist Gilbert as a gross breach of Hitler's word.

When Jodl was appointed to his mobilization post as head of the Wehrmacht Command Office on August 23, 1939—had the war broken out a month later, General von Sodenstern would have held this post and Jodl the 4th Mountain Division—he was now directly subordinate to Hitler, whose military staff was the OKW. He was introduced to Hitler in person for the first time on September 3, 1939, in Hitler's special train on the way to the Polish front.

Once again, it was Hitler's successes, this time on the battlefield, that captivated Jodl and strengthened his belief in Hitler's genius. The demonstrations of support by the people and the troops had, as he once wrote, deeply impressed him. But he had also become aware of the problems inherent in his own position: "The man who succeeded in occupying Norway under the eyes of the English fleet dominating the seas, and who, with inferior forces, brought France's feared military power crashing down like a house of cards in a 40-day campaign, was no longer willing, after these successes, to listen to military advisers who had previously warned against such excesses. From then on, he demanded nothing more from them than the purely technical documentation for his decisions and the smooth running of the military apparatus to put his decisions into practice."(19)

How did Jodl view the situation at that time, in September 1944?

"As long as the enemy has not yet set foot on German soil, everything must be done to ward them off. Perhaps

unconditional surrender can still be prevented," he had explained to me as we parted. "I have high hopes for the new turbo fighters‡‡‡ and snorkel submarines. Arms production is running at full speed, and last but not least, there remains the hope that the Western powers will break with the Russians."

This last hope expressed revealed—perhaps unconsciously to Jodl himself—the influence of Hitler's political pipe dreams on the sober thinking of the General Staff officer. During the first years of the war, I had noticed that this influence was sometimes stronger than that of the "old school." Jodl had occasionally used phrases that I had not heard him use before and that made him seem temporarily alien to me. That changed fundamentally after the clash with Hitler in Winniza. It was clear to me that his former enthusiasm had turned into a duty of obedience and probably also resignation. This was not blind obedience, but the obedience of a soldier that had grown out of centuries of tradition and which, for Jodl and his comrades, was the foundation of military and leadership discipline. At the same time, however, Jodl still believed in Hitler's military genius, albeit to a limited extent. After weathering the Russian winter offensive in 1941 and the Italian defection, Jodl had learned that crises could be overcome, and perhaps he still hoped for that now. What could be the deeper cause of this hope in such a sober-minded officer?

In his book Die deutsche Katastrophe (The German Catastrophe), historian Friedrich Meinecke writes about the General Staff that the balance between rational and irrational motives had been disrupted by an overemphasis on technical rationality. This often happened with such elemental passion that it also endangered the balance between the rational and irrational forces of the human soul. When I read these insightful remarks by the German historian after the collapse, I believed I understood some of the connections that I had only vaguely sensed on that return trip to Italy: that Jodl's strongest bond to Hitler was to be found in the irrational sphere.

To the casual observer, Jodl, with his almost Prussian austerity and self-control, might have appeared . Those who got to know him better discovered a humorous, helpful superior. I knew this from letters written by young officers. But only the very few who really got close to him knew that behind this man's reserve lay an extremely sensitive nature with a musical, almost romantic streak. It was here, in Jodl's almost mythical conception of loyalty and his ardent love for his fatherland, that his strongest bond with Hitler lay. "This man is Germany's destiny, for better or for worse," Colonel General Frhr. v. Fritsch once declared. Jodl's attitude corresponded to this view in every respect. Whether out of loyalty to the head of state or out of a sober recognition of the realities of an authoritarian state, for Jodl, Hitler was synonymous with the fate of Germany. In his loyalty to Hitler—what a tragic mistake it would prove to be!—he believed he was remaining loyal to Germany.

Although "Queen Reason" had once warned Jodl about Hitler, he now felt bound to this "infernal greatness," even after the years of exhilarating military successes had been replaced by the night of a desperate battle for survival: "In all these disappointments, there was no other path for me as a human being and a soldier than that of loyalty."

Jodl was a soldier, "soldiering was in my blood," he later testified in Nuremberg. He was a soldier without being constrained by this predisposition. However, his unconditional loyalty to the head of state and supreme commander allowed only limited intellectual engagement with the entanglement in which he had become embroiled. Perhaps he did not even see it because it did not fit in with his simple, straightforward nature. It was precisely this that made him, as he probably only realized later, a good tool of evil.

The thinking of the front-line soldier, to whom he devoted all his love, led Jodl to demand the same obedience from himself that he demanded from the men at the front. For him, there was only the external enemy. Where he recognized it internally, in Germany itself, he confronted it when his sense of justice and honor as an officer was directly violated. The abundance of tasks that came his way every day—the war diary keeper of the Wehrmacht leadership staff, Prof. Percy Ernst Schramm, vividly described them as a witness in Nuremberg—left him little time for brooding. It is probably no coincidence that a large part of the rebels were not

no longer actively serving. Freed from the immediate responsibility of day-to-day events, they had greater inner freedom to act. Jodl would have rejected the idea of resigning on the pretext of illness—Hitler had forbidden resignation for the duration of the war—just as he would have rejected the idea of

assassination. The more hopeless the situation became, the more strongly he felt bound to his post. The oath of allegiance he had once enthusiastically sworn as an ensign was still the highest law for him in the sense of serving his country to the end.
When officers such as Beck, Tresckow, and Stauffenberg, in their desperation, had decided to resort to the extreme measure of an assassination attempt, I could not deny them my respect, even admiration, for their consistency. Their deed would probably form the moral capital of our country in the future. But my feelings were torn. Above all, for personal reasons, they had to go to the man whose conscience told him to keep his oath. It was foreseeable that Alfred Jodl would meet a fate no less tragic than that which his comrades had taken upon themselves.

9.
The Bridge

"It is remarkable that we can say least about the person we love – we simply love them."
Max Frisch, "Diary"

My request for transfer to Germany—initially to the attaché department—was approved, and at the beginning of October 1944, I moved into Jodl's home in the gatehouse of the OKW's alternative headquarters. Air raid sirens sounded day and night. No one understood that I had voluntarily left the oasis of peace on Lake Garda to witness how total war was swinging the torch over the Reich capital, and that this gave me inner peace. And yet that was the case. Only occasionally did the last weeks at Lake Garda appear before me like a mirage: the sound of the lake when I woke up, the spray of the waves on my skin, the brightly colored abundance of roses, the scent of camellia blossoms, which turn into such incomparable colors as they die; long shadows cast by chestnut trees on autumnal grass on steep slopes, the whistling of the mountain wind in the fans of their golden leaves, stony steep paths up to the chapel on a narrow rock ledge, guarded by the lances of cypress trees; and the miracle of light on the heights of Monte Baldo, when everything in Gargnano was already in deep shadow. On the evening before my departure, my friends had called me out onto the terrace: just like on the first day of my arrival, a large barge glided silently and close to the jetty, its bright yellow sails trimmed close to the wind.
In November 1944, I managed to find a job at the branch office of the German Red Cross Presidium at Halleschen Tor. This office for prisoners of war was headed by Mr. Grüneisen, a man of great ability and integrity. I was assigned to work with the British and American prisoner-of-war camps in Italy, advising relatives and searching for missing persons. It was depressing that we could hardly keep up with the flood of inquiries, but we nevertheless tried to add a personal touch to the completed forms by adding a note.
In mid-October, Alfred came to Berlin—he had to go to the Western Front. From the phone calls during his short time at home, I could tell that something unusual was in the air. On November 20, 1944, the Führer's headquarters was moved to Berlin, and at the beginning of December to "Adlerhorst" near Ziegenberg. When Alfred flew there and was back in Berlin for a day, he put his arm around my shoulders as we said goodbye: "Keep your fingers crossed that the foggy weather continues. You will have noticed that something special is going on. If the god of war is kind to us, we may be able to save Germany from the worst." He didn't mention the impending Ardennes offensive; I only heard about it the next day on the radio.
It was only later that Alfred described to me the plan behind the offensive: through the enemy's thinly spread front in the Ardennes region, massed German units were to break through at the junction between the British and Americans via Liège to Antwerp in order to bring this most important Allied supply port into German hands if possible. Hitler's hopes had gone even further in their utopianism; he had explained to the division commanders in a speech: "Anyone who sits like a spider in its web and watches developments unfold can see how these contradictions develop from hour to hour. If a few more heavy blows are dealt here, it could happen at any moment that this artificially maintained common front suddenly collapses with a thunderclap."(20)

"Strong German forces launched an attack on December 16, 1944, at 5:30 a.m. across a broad front from the Siegfried Line after a short but powerful preparatory barrage." When I arrived for duty, I saw tense faces everywhere. People had become so accustomed to the terminology of "withdrawal," "entrenchment," and "delaying resistance" in the Wehrmacht report that the word "attack" apparently had something stirring about it. In great suspense, I waited for Alfred's call in the evening.
"So far, everything is going well, the losses are acceptable." After three days, his voice sounded very depressed: "The situation has become clear, our troops are going through hell due to the heavy air raids." The battle for Bastogne had begun.
Was this operation, which resulted in heavy losses, still justifiable at that time? "It was a desperate attempt in a desperate situation, justified according to Clausewitz," Jodl later wrote. "Only this attempt offered a chance. In the east, the ground forces had a large numerical superiority, in the west only a small one, but the Luftwaffe had a strong superiority. It was hoped that in winter, with suitable weather conditions, it would not be as effective. If the offensive succeeded and numerous Allied divisions were destroyed, it would be possible to expect a halt in the West for a certain period of time and then, with real effort, stop the Russian advance, which had reached the Vistula and Warsaw at that time."(21)
Christmas 1944. Was it a consolation to know that this would probably be the last Christmas of the war? Perhaps the last ever? On Christmas Eve, for the first time in weeks, there was no air raid; one hardly dared to believe it. "What has come crashing down on me this year," Alfred wrote to me in his Christmas letter. "The defeat in the East, the defection of our allies, Irma's death, the assassination, the loss of France, the complete collapse of our air force, the invasion of German territory by the enemy."
On January 12, 1945, the Russian offensive began at the Baranov bridgehead, and the Ardennes offensive was finally abandoned. The High Command of the Wehrmacht now moved permanently to its alternative headquarters in Berlin. Alfred returned from the West more silent than ever. The failure of the Ardennes offensive, the losses of the troops, and the unstoppable advance of the Russians weighed heavily on him.
February 3 was a clear, frosty day. At around 10 a.m., the alarm was sounded. "Strong bomber units approaching Leipzig." Shortly thereafter, a full alarm was sounded—Berlin after all. At the Red Cross office, my colleague and I took our files and coats under our arms and went down to the basement. We chose the smallest room we could find with a vaulted ceiling. Then I remembered that I had left my thick mountain boots from Italy upstairs. I ran up the
basement stairs and almost collided with the air raid warden. His face under his helmet was ashen. "Christmas trees above us," he said in a hoarse voice, pointing upward. I took a deep breath. My God, there I saw the dreaded beacon in the sky, the guidance signals for the bomber stream. The red, yellow, and green lights flickered in the pale February sky. And now, through a gap between two houses, you could see the bomber stream approaching, its contrails tearing the sky into strips, the air vibrating with the thunder of engines. With two or three jumps, I was back in the basement, and already the house was shaking from the first impacts all around. It sounded like tons of debris being dumped on tin roofs. "Right in the middle of the Easter eggs," said the air raid warden. I stood leaning against the wall, my knees unsteady, struggling to maintain my composure, when the second wave came and knocked us off balance. The earth reared up at ever shorter intervals, making it impossible to stand, and the lights went out. A short, howling whistle, a booming explosion that shook the house to its foundations. "Direct hit!" a voice shouted. I felt my heart racing, then beating slowly and almost painfully against my ribs. To calm myself, I tried to count the impacts. Now came the third wave. Rrhhhmm, rrhhhmm. My God, does it take a long time to suffocate or burn to death? Was Alfred in the Reich Chancellery, and had it been hit too? I knew that hundreds of pounds of red-hot debris now lay above us—one more hit and the phosphorus-laden lava would seep in, and we would shrink into white dust. The third wave subsided, we stood up with trembling knees and shone the candle on the ceiling, which was covered with fine cracks like spider webs. It was getting noticeably warmer. A door was pushed open and a man was wheeled in on a stretcher. He was unconscious, his massive chest rising and falling laboriously beneath

his torn shirt. A nurse cleaned the lime dust from his face and tried in vain to stop the bloody trickle from his ear and mouth. Rrhhhmm, rrhhhmm—the fourth wave. The candles went out as if extinguished by a ghostly hand. And then suddenly, louder than the bursting impacts before—silence. We looked at each other, nodded, all talking at once.
. "The cellar door is blocked," said the air raid warden after a reconnaissance mission. "Let's see if the emergency exit is still clear." "It's closed too," shouted a man from the ladder. After a while, we heard digging outside. The door to the emergency exit was pulled open, and cement debris fell toward us. First, the stretcher was carefully pushed through, then we crawled out one by one. When I stood up, I was transfixed, for an inferno of hellish beauty met my eyes. To the right of the Halleschen Tor, the block of houses burned like a giant torch, the firestorm driving myriads of sparks before it and whipping them into the air in a wild witch hunt. The burnt-out facades opposite glowed phosphorescent green, red-hot tongues of fire licked out of the window cavities, and ink-black clouds of smoke billowed out of the lower floors and rolled along the street like a monster from prehistoric times. Two horses stood in the middle of the square. One animal had its bridle hanging from its neck, the other was without any harness. Sweaty with fear and heat, the two horses stood with their eyes closed, knees trembling and tails tucked between their legs, their heads bowed low and turned away from the firestorm, a pitiful picture of abandoned creatures. I stumbled over a broken lamppost, the bulb still burning. Then I noticed how the smoke was making me cough and my eyes began to water, and soon they were burning like fire. "Tie scarves around your faces!" someone shouted. The names were called out, no one was missing except for one man who had sought shelter in the basement opposite and, as we later heard, had died there. Our office was a pile of rubble; there was nothing left to save. So out of this cauldron. "This way!" "No, better the street, there's less smoke there." Shadows rushing past in the smoke. Rrhhmmm, was it starting again? "No, time fuses." "This miserable smoke!"
It was getting lighter at Potsdamer Platz, the shrapnel crunching under our feet. "Let's try to get to Lützow Hospital," suggested Countess Waldersee, our vice-chairwoman. "We need to get our eyes treated." The hospital was undamaged, and long rows of stretchers with dead and injured people stood in the corridor. When we came out of the washroom, we saw SS soldiers carrying a stretcher up the stairs. On it lay a dead man with a grim and
merciless expression. "That's Freisler," whispered a doctor. So that was what the hated president of the People's Court looked like! "That's God's judgment," said the matron, Mary von Bülow, in a quiet but clear voice.
Our offer to help was declined, so I decided to get home as quickly as possible to inform Alfred. I could only hope that neither the Reich Chancellery nor the OKW headquarters in Dahlem had been hit. Despite the sight of the many dead and the rubble, I was suddenly seized by a kind of euphoria, a purely creative feeling of life of almost unbridled strength. I was alive! How could I get home now? There were no trams or suburban trains. Then a truck loaded with rubble came along, with Russian prisoners of war sitting on top. I waved, and the driver stopped. "Well, where are you headed?" "To Dahlem?" I asked. He nodded. "You can come with me as far as Breitenbachplatz." I climbed up, the Russians moved aside, and one of them offered me his wind-protected seat with a broad grin. I handed out my cigarettes—weren't they my brothers in danger?
At the Oskar-Helene-Heim, I looked at myself in a vending machine mirror and was shocked by my appearance: red-rimmed eyes and still black streaks on my face. But when I got home, I forgot all about that and, overjoyed to be alive, ran to my husband's barracks. Alfred was bent over a table with maps, and Major i. G. Büchs was reporting on the air situation. "We had a direct hit!" I shouted in the middle of the briefing. Alfred turned around in surprise, then I saw him laugh. "What do you look like!" But his voice sounded very different than usual. "I'll be right over, go wash up first." Later, at home, he confessed to me that despite all his worries during the attack, he had been reassured by the feeling that "Rabbit" – my nickname – would "get through it." "I didn't know what a 'Rabbit' could be so nervous about," I confessed to him.

The German Red Cross Office for Prisoners of War was initially housed in makeshift accommodations in Nikolassee. Soon after, I took over as deputy director of Regional Office III in Zehlendorf. About 30 women from all walks of life worked there. No matter how badly the daily attacks had destroyed the transport links, they came! They came even if they had to walk for more than two hours, and they only went
only went into the basement when contrails were visible in the sky.
Our work was no longer focused on prisoners of war, who were now, thank God, safe. Now it was a matter of helping the stream of refugees from Pomerania, East Prussia, the Sudetenland, and Silesia and providing information about their fate.
"Take a look at this," Alfred said one night, sliding a red-bound file folder across the desk to me. "Eclipse" was printed in large letters on the cover. This document, captured from British prisoners, contained instructions for the occupation. I unfolded the enclosed map of Germany. It showed the planned division of our country into three zones—France's participation was not yet planned at that time—and the Russian zone border ran along the Elbe River. This meant that my sister-in-law and her four children, who had fled from Kassel to the Harz Mountains, would fall under Russian occupation.
"Now you will understand why we had to try one last chance in the West," Alfred explained to me. "If we had succeeded, we could have prevented what is now happening in East Prussia." He showed me an appeal to the Red Army written by Ilya Ehrenburg:
"Kill! Kill! There is nothing innocent about the Germans, neither the living nor the unborn. Follow Comrade Stalin's instructions and crush the fascist beast in its lair forever. Break the racial arrogance of Germanic women with violence! Take them as your rightful spoils. Kill! You brave Red Army soldiers charging forward!"
The agony in its final agonizing stages began. Emaciated refugees and horses trudged through the streets in long lines, putting one foot in front of the other with great effort in the icy east wind. Would a prior surrender have been possible? Under Hitler, hardly. But there were other reasons against it; Jodl testified to this in Nuremberg:
"In the winter of 1945, there were many reasons against it, apart from the fact that the question of surrender can only be decided by the Supreme Commander. Above all, it was against the fact that it could only be an unconditional surrender, because foreign countries had left us in no doubt about that . . . Now, unconditional surrender required the units to remain where they were and thus be captured by the enemy facing them.
The same thing would have to happen that had happened in the winter of 1941 at Vyazma. Millions of prisoners would suddenly have to camp out in the open in winter. Death would have reaped a tremendous harvest, and above all, all three and a half million who were still on the Eastern Front would have fallen into the hands of the Eastern enemy. It was our aim to save as many people as possible in the western region. This could only be achieved if the two fronts were brought closer together . .
Almost every day brought news of a tragedy, the destruction of a city. On the night of February 13 to 14, our windows began to rattle without a shot being fired. It was eerie. That night, Dresden was razed to the ground in two attacks, and the approximately 250,000 dead, mostly refugees, were burned on pyres because there was no time for burials.
My youngest sister had asked me to help Albrecht Haushofer, and I passed the request on to Alfred. "I can't give you much hope," he said that night, "the Führer has made very strong statements. I'll be glad if I can achieve anything for Bonin."
Colonel von Bonin had been arrested on January 17, 1945, on Hitler's orders because he had drafted the order to evacuate Warsaw. Although Chief of Staff Guderian had signed the order, Hitler's anger was directed at Bonin. "I want to meet the General Staff clique in which the spirit of July 20 arose; it must be eradicated." Jodl suddenly intervened here. Lieutenant Colonel John von Freyend, Keitel's adjutant, later described the scene to me. "You had to be there to witness it! With a red face, the Colonel General

said to the Führer: 'You can't be surprised, my Führer. When a man like Bonin, who belongs to one of the best and oldest Prussian officer families, is simply thrown into prison on the basis of rumors and without any reason, so that he is not even given a trial, then you cannot be surprised when the spirit of July 20 spreads. We all held our breath," John concluded his report, "We thought it was all over for the colonel general. But the Führer didn't say a word."

In February, I had sent Bonin a message in prison saying that we would do everything we could to get him released.

At the end of the month, Alfred brought me a letter from him. I opened the letter addressed to "Colonel General Jodl" and began to read it aloud. But suddenly I stopped because I couldn't believe my eyes: "How often have I thought about our conversation in Rome in this damned cell," Bonin's clear handwriting read, "and how we talked then about how close genius and madness can be, and whether it would not be better if H. disappeared from the scene. Today, I can only say that it would have been the only right thing to do to get rid of this madman in time." I felt cold sweat literally breaking out on my forehead; I stood up. Alfred, who had only been listening casually while doing his paperwork, asked in surprise, "Why aren't you reading on?" "I can't quite decipher it," I muttered and ran to the kitchen under some pretext to burn the letter with trembling hands. Who had delivered this letter, through whose hands had it passed, had anyone read it? "Heads must roll," Goebbels' terrible words haunted me for the next few days, and I jumped every time the phone or the doorbell rang.

And then, in connection with this, there was an amusing experience. The doorbell rang, and looking down from above, I saw a police officer at the front door. With my heart pounding, I opened it and found myself face to face with an old neighbor from Pomerania, Alexander von Quistorp. "I joined the police force so I wouldn't be drafted into the Volkssturm," he explained to me, unaware that his appearance had frightened me so much.

"How is Wernher?" I wanted to know. He said he knew nothing about his son-in-law, Wernher von Braun, who was probably on the run from the Russians.

Since the fall, I had been trying to gather the papers necessary for our marriage. It was almost hopeless, because there were difficulties due to my mother's British origin, and also because the authorities in Pomerania did not respond. I wrote letters and sent telegrams. Finally, at the end of February, I had the essentials together, and Alfred suggested March 7, the birthday of my fallen brother, as the wedding date.

At that time, the Berlin city administration was still issuing special rations for weddings, and I happened to be the last person to receive them

received them. "You can congratulate yourself," said the city employee. "Will it be enough?"

We were just a very small group: my parents, Konrad Graf Bullion, Irma's brother, his son, Dr. Franz Graf Bullion, my cousin Margaret Böhlau, the Herter family from the lower floor who had been bombed out, and the two of us. I was glad that my parents from Potsdam had arrived early in the morning before the first air raids began. I had just taken the crystal and porcelain out of the basement and started setting the table when the first alarm sounded. So I quickly cleared everything away again. But it was only a false alarm, and when Alfred came over from work after the all-clear, we walked to the registry office. On the way there, we had to walk around several unexploded bombs from the previous night that had been covered with straw. The registrar forgot the usual addition of Hitler's "Mein Kampf," and we didn't ask for it. "Have you ever actually read it?" I asked Alfred on the way home. When he shook his head, I said with a laugh, "Neither have I."

At home, everything was set, and we found a festive meal waiting for us: soup, cold ham (a gift from Marshal Antonescu), a salad platter, pudding, and French sparkling wine. Our attic room was a flower garden. Hitler had sent a camellia tree with 42 blossoms.

After the first course, Alfred stood up and addressed my parents:

"Everything about today is unusual, not only that I am speaking at my own wedding, but also what I have to say."

After a brief remembrance of Irma and the fallen members of the family, he continued:
"When people marry, they usually enter the early summer of their lives. Before them lies a world of hopes, transfigured by desires that happiness can grant people if they always carry it in their hearts and are strong enough to fight for it again and again.
We, too, are still young and strong enough to hope, to love, and to fight. We know life with all its ups and downs. We also know the unusual gravity behind this hour, in which the witnesses of our culture are sinking into ruins and ashes and the die is being cast for the future of our people. So today is also a conscious and
determined step into the future and not a retreat into personal happiness, unconcerned about the events around us.
I hope we will be strong and selfless enough to face every fate with dignity, fearlessness, and loyalty, to help each other, and to bear all that is imposed upon us. Those who love life, are loved themselves, and do not fear death will be happy until the very last hour. So let us raise our glasses and toast not only to our future together, but also to the bond that may unite us all as a small community within the larger community of the German people, to whom our entire being shall belong in the future."
When I took my parents to the S-Bahn in the afternoon, we said goodbye with heavy hearts. "That was the last great joy of my life," said my mother; she had not seen Alfred since the beginning of the war and had taken him completely into her heart in those few short hours.
When I returned, Alfred suggested a walk in the Grunewald: "Our honeymoon." It was a warm evening, the blackbirds were singing, and a spicy scent rose from the earth. We had barely returned when the phone rang: General Westphal, Chief of Staff of the Commander-in-Chief West, was on the line. I saw my husband's face flush red, and he ran his hand over his head. "At Remagen?" he asked incredulously, "That's not possible." Pause. "Yes, I will inform the Führer immediately." He put down the receiver, came over to me, and took me by the shoulders: "Patton has crossed the Rhine at Remagen with tanks, and on our wedding anniversary." He looked at his watch. "I have to leave right away, and I can see that it will be late by the time I get back from the Führer. I'll bring you some rolls from the vegetarian kitchen." The door slammed behind him.
I began to clear the festive table. Patton had crossed a bridge, just like us. But Patton knew that victory lay ahead of him. We knew that collapse lay ahead of us. We had crossed a bridge whose deck led into uncertainty, into nothingness. But wasn't this perhaps where the hope for something better lay?
At around 9 p.m., the full alarm was sounded. The impacts were so strong that even in our heavily reinforced concrete basement, Putzi hid away. When I came upstairs after the all-clear, I saw that the air pressure had blown the glass out of all the windows
, chunks of plaster and straw matting were hanging from the ceilings, and furniture and floors were covered in dust and mortar. I set to work and was just about to take two buckets of rubble outside when Alfred entered the room. He looked around silently, then ran his finger around the edge of the telephone, which was covered in plaster dust, and held it under my nose. "May I ask," he said with a smile, "when was the last time my dear housekeeper dusted?"
AT THE MERCY OF
DISGRACE
Unconditional surrender
"At this hour, I can only ask that the victors treat them with mercy."
Alfred Jodl, Reims, May 7, 1945
Was it dust that I had to wipe from my eyes? Where was I? Dazed, I felt someone unhook my parachute and heard the word "Prague." Dazed, I got out, put the dog on the ground, and followed the others. I saw them go into some hall, sit down at some table—some people in some city, and I was completely indifferent to them all.
The door to the next room opened, and a young Luftwaffe captain with a Knight's Cross looked at us in surprise and then closed it again. Through the crack, I saw a row of young pilots sitting at a table

covered with a white tablecloth. So there was still something here that had substance and order. Dr. Lehmann, the chief judge of the Wehrmacht, sat down next to me. "Hungry?" He put a sausage sandwich in my hand, Putzi pushed her way out of her bag, and I felt better.
Major von Szymonski came with the news that we would be continuing south by car late in the evening. I walked around the airfield. I saw Putzi burying a bone that the ground crew had thrown to her. Her little black nose was brown from Bohemian soil. "Do you really think we'll both come back here again?" I asked her. Her eyes looked at me with the boundless trust that only dogs are capable of, and I had to kiss her little snout because she had taught me to laugh again.
When I returned to the hall, General Scherff pulled me aside.
aside. "What am I supposed to do if I'm interrogated? It's impossible to incriminate comrades. Isn't it better to end it all?" I reassured him, without realizing how serious his words were. A few days later, he took his own life.
Around midnight, General Toussaint, then still commander in Prague, sent cars to continue the journey. We drove through the Bohemian Forest, through endless dark woods. Occasionally, the beam of the headlights caught troops on the march back or Cossacks from Vlasov's army§§§ with horses tethered at rest. Dawn was slowly breaking, and the chain of the Alps began to appear on the horizon. What might it look like in Berlin now?
Around seven o'clock, our car stopped in front of the Reich Chancellery in Bischofswiesen. Stiff but curious, I got out. So this was where my husband had worked all those years when Hitler was at the Berghof. A large square, with an elongated building on the left. "That's where Lammers works," I was told. At right angles to it was a simple and beautifully built house in Bavarian style—that had been Keitel and Jodl's office building. The furnishings were also simple, but tasteful and dignified. Downstairs, I found a large gathering at the breakfast table: Wehrmacht officers, officials from various ministries, secretaries, and SS men. After eating, I took my most important belongings to the air-raid shelter in the basement, lay down, and, exhausted, slept until the next morning. Loud commands woke me up, and I ran to the window. The Reich Chancellery was surrounded by SS troops in full field gear. What did that mean? I hurriedly got dressed and tried to find out what was going on downstairs, but no one knew what was happening. I had intended to go to the barber, but the SS guards refused to let me pass. I asked to speak to the commander, and he politely stood up. I recognized him. It was the same man who had once commanded Mussolini's bodyguard. After some consideration, he issued me a special pass. "Please use the air-raid shelter tunnel," he requested. There was a bicycle leaning against a wall. Without hesitation, I "borrowed" it and asked
my way to the Strub barracks. I knew my husband's representative there. However, he had no news of him, nor did he know the reasons for the bombing of the Reich Chancellery. From the barracks, I cycled to Berchtesgaden. As I sat at the hairdresser's, enjoying the warm water on my scalp, I remembered that the last time I had my hair washed, I had run to the basement with my curlers in my head because of an air raid alarm. In the next booth, a conversation was being conducted in low voices. Suddenly, my ear caught the words: "Yes, and now he has decided to stay in Berlin and die there." My God, that could only be Hitler, and Alfred was still with him. I jumped up, ran to the phone, and asked for the number for Obersalzberg. Göring's adjutant, Colonel von Brauchitsch, answered. "Is there any way to fly back to Berlin?" I asked him breathlessly. "I would advise against it," he said calmly, "the Colonel General left Berlin for the north the day before yesterday." I couldn't believe it. "Are you quite sure that my husband is out of Berlin?" "Quite sure," he reassured me, "we expect the Colonel General here in the next few days, but it's also possible that he will remain in the north." Alfred separated from Hitler – I could have screamed with joy and relief! It was only under the hair dryer that I realized with a shock what Hitler's decision meant for the people of Berlin. And perhaps also for Potsdam. What might it look like there now? Were my parents still alive? I sat at the hairdresser's and felt ashamed. Early the next morning, the air was filled with the roar of an approaching storm of enemy bombers, and soon heavy explosions from the Obersalzberg shook the air; Hitler's Berghof was razed to the ground.

While Mrs. Keitel calmly watched the approach of a new wave, I ran down to the air-raid shelter, thinking of my impressions of Berlin. First there were winding paths, then steep stairs leading 200 meters underground. At the end of the tunnel sat Ministers Lammers and Funk, pale and distraught. They told me about the events of the previous day and were glad to have survived it: "The day before yesterday, General Koller came from Berlin to see the Reich Marshal and reported what Jodl had said in Krampnitz: that the Führer could be removed from
* Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe.
physical reasons, he wanted to shoot himself so as not to fall into enemy hands wounded. When they tried to persuade him to turn the troops from west to east, the Führer declared that the Reich Marshal could do that better!" "So what?" I exclaimed. "We then sent a radio message to the Führer asking whether he agreed that the Reich Marshal should take over overall command." "And what was the reply?" "Not deprived of my right to act, I forbid any steps in the direction you suggest." Shortly thereafter, we—Funk and I, then the Reich Marshal, Bouhler, and also Colonel von Brauchitsch—were arrested. Bormann is behind all this, of course; there is a rumor that the Reich Marshal is on trial. We are free again, but who knows for how long?"
"This is all so crazy!" I wanted to say, but instead I looked around to see if anyone had heard us.
On April 26, I cycled back to the Strub Barracks and was delighted to hear that Jodl had arrived in Flensburg. Two days later, Colonel von Maizieres, who had flown over the Russian armies at night, brought me a letter from Alfred. In large, hastily written lines, Alfred described the events since our separation: the last conference in the Führer's bunker, the OKW's intention to turn the 12th Army against the flank of the 3rd Russian Panzer Army, regardless of what the Americans were doing on the Elbe. "We still have radio contact with Berlin, where the enemy has fought its way into the city center," he wrote. "My heart bleeds when I hear these reports. It's like the battle of the Visigoths at Vesuvius."
I spent the next few days more or less glued to the radio. Almost apathetically, we absorbed news that would have seemed inconceivable years before: on April 29, the shooting of Mussolini and Clara Petacci at Lake Como, the undignified display of their corpses hanging by their feet in Piazza Loreto in Milan. "Evviva il Duce! A Morte!" - Away with him! Then the surrender of Army Group South in northern Italy. And then, late in the evening of May 1, a special report from Flensburg, signed by Dönitz:
"The Führer's headquarters reports that our Führer Adolf Hitler fell for Germany this afternoon in his command post in the Reich Chancellery, fighting Bolshevism until his last breath."
I only heard about the macabre events in the Reich Chancellery in Berlin later from the stenographers; I still had no idea of Hitler's actual death. However, I couldn't shake the thought that the life of this man, who had led our people into the abyss after an unprecedented rise, was now over. Bitterness and nagging questions tormented me. Above all, however, I was consumed by pain at the senselessness of the sacrifices, and fear of what lay ahead replaced the nightmare of the past, while at the same time I felt a sense of liberation.
"My first task is to save the German people from destruction by the advancing Bolshevik enemy," was the motto of the new head of state, Grand Admiral Dönitz. Leading officers in the Strube Barracks also reckoned with the possibility, albeit vague, of a rift between the former enemies. And it was still assumed that Jodl would come to the south. That led me to follow Field Marshal Kesselring's advice to join his staff, which was retreating to Austria. I visited Kesselring at his headquarters in Mittersill. With his calm demeanor, he struck me as a rock in the surf. Contrary to his staff's hopes for a possible imminent break in the enemy coalition, he took a very realistic view of the situation. He advised me to return with Mrs. Keitel. "I have heard rumors of clashes between Austrians and Reich Germans, so you will be safer at home. However, Berchtesgaden is not exactly the most advisable place to stay." I said goodbye to him with a heavy heart; the clear, clean military atmosphere here was a relief from the signs of disintegration in the Reich Chancellery. I was also reluctant to stay with Mrs. Keitel, but we were in the same boat, and she was suffering from heartache.

We drove back. The low number on Mrs. Keitel's car revealed her husband's ministerial rank. I had to think of how, in 1918, at the time of the collapse, no driver in uniform could have been seen with officers' wives in the midst of the disintegrating troops. We, on the other hand, never heard a single angry word. Why was that? Weren't the circumstances much more difficult than in 1918? I saw the reasons for this, and I still see them today, in what is perhaps the only positive legacy of the regime: the elimination of class distinctions
and a strong sense of a shared destiny that was still effective at the time.
Shortly before the small town of Hallein, not far from Salzburg, my husband's driver stopped. "Do you hear the shooting?" He went to a farm to assess the situation. When he returned, he took off his mountain infantry cap and wiped his sweat-drenched forehead. "The Moroccans are here and they're causing trouble. They threw some of the SS into the Salzach." The sergeant suggested hiding at a remote farm owned by a farmer he knew. When we drove into the yard, we found the house empty and everything locked. We spent the night sitting in the car, and at dawn we broke open the barn door, drove the cars into the barn, and covered them with hay. The officers' and drivers' weapons were sunk in the pond. In the morning, the farmer's wife, a pretty, strong woman, arrived. She took our presence relatively calmly. We were still discussing the situation in the kitchen when we heard loud banging on the locked front door. Through the gap in the curtains, I saw about ten men standing in front of the door. They were wearing concentration camp uniforms, had bottles of schnapps in their pockets, and were carrying submachine guns. The farmer's wife opened the door, and we heard a flurry of excited voices. After a while, they left, and the farmer's wife called us downstairs. "Those were the guys from the concentration camp next door," she said excitedly, "now they want me off the farm because I hit my Polish girl when she stole something." Now it was our turn to calm her down. I was deeply affected by the sight of the emaciated prisoners in their shivering striped clothes. The grim determination, the expression of hatred, made me feel something I knew little about. Or had I unconsciously pushed this knowledge away?
I decided to go into town to get an idea of the situation. Wearing my coat with the Red Cross armband and carrying my ID, with the dog in my arms, I felt reasonably safe. I took a detour through back alleys to the market. A large crowd had gathered there, and Russian prisoners of war were sitting on an overturned ladder wagon and singing. From the base of a monument, a former convict was giving a speech that was accompanied by loud shouts. Although I felt anxious, I moved closer. I had to find out more about these people, about their
fate, which was etched in the faces around me. I was still wrestling with the decision to speak to one of the prisoners when one of them approached me and stroked the dog: "Good little animal." He was Polish and had worked in Berlin, I heard. Suddenly, wild shouting broke out. I saw a man being dragged along, beaten by the crowd with clubs. His head hung forward, covered in blood, and I ran away as fast as I could. "Not good," I had heard the Pole say. There was great excitement on the farm; the concentration camp prisoners had returned, looted the place, and threatened to set fire to the farm if the Polish girl was not given satisfaction. In the evening, there was another banging on the door, another heated exchange, but the resolute farmer's wife kept the upper hand. This went on for a few days, and I became uneasy when our driver confessed that he had told the communist mayor, a former school friend, that we were here. When I later learned about the crimes in the concentration camps in Nuremberg, these days seemed like a ride across Lake Constance in retrospect.
When I ventured into the city on May 7, all the shops were closed. A crack was cautiously opened and I was waved in through the back entrance. Inside, a group of distraught people were sitting around the radio, and I sat down with them. And now I could hardly believe my ears: "This morning, the unconditional surrender was signed in Reims by Colonel General Gustav Jodl." Why Gustav? – that was my first thought. Then – Alfred of all people had had to sign this document? How those who had signed the Treaty of Versailles had once been reviled in Germany! I stood up, no one needed to know who I was, tears were running down my face. I walked back in a daze. Soldiers from all branches of the

military came towards me, eager to reach home before being captured. But almost every few hundred meters they were stopped and "searched" by former internees using every trick in the book. Many of them ended up with only their underwear on, but they hurried on, on and on.
Unconditional surrender! I remembered the document "Eclipse" that Alfred had shown me in April—the maps with Germany divided into zones. I climbed a slope
and lay down in the grass. I didn't see the flowering meadows or the bright blue sky. All this had been foreseeable, and yet it burned like fire. It was already dusk when I went to the farm, and I saw an endless row of lights rolling along the highway like a string of pearls. Tanks—the Americans were coming. I heard shouting from the farm; they had been worried about me.
Later, Alfred wrote to me about those days:
"In one of your letters, you spoke of the tragedy that I, of all people, had to sign the surrender. It was no coincidence. I considered it my duty to do so. When Admiral von Friedeburg reported from Reims that he was being pressured to conclude the agreement, it became clear from the draft treaty that any further fighting would be blamed on the new government and that, once the surrender came into effect 24 hours after signing, we would no longer be allowed to make any moves. Any such movements would otherwise be considered a breach of the treaty. But I knew that no power in the world could prevent the troops on the Eastern Front from moving westward into the American-British sphere of influence instead of into Soviet captivity, as long as they still had a way back. A way out of this dilemma had to be found. Friedeburg could not do that. I had to suggest that an army officer familiar with the situation be sent. It was foreseeable that Dönitz would choose me. I was treated as an officer in every respect in Reims, and I found the commander-in-chief to be understanding of our situation. I was given permission to fly a general staff officer to Pilsen, where he was escorted by a strong American escort through Bohemia and the street fighting to Schörner, in order to explain our situation in detail. I obtained a period of 48 hours instead of 24 between the signing and the entry into force, and after the signing I said the following:
With this signature, the German people and the German Wehrmacht are at the mercy of the victors. Both have achieved and endured more in this war than perhaps any other people on earth. At this hour, I can only ask that the victors treat them with mercy.
A longer delay to save even more people was
not possible. I had to sign that night, May 7, otherwise the bombing campaign would have resumed and the Anglo-American lines would have been blocked for all troops retreating from the Eastern Front. But the thanks are due to General Bedell Smith. <<22
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2.
Take it easy
"Don't despair, not even about the fact that you are not despairing. Even when everything seems to be coming to an end, new forces are coming to the fore, which means that you are alive." Franz Kafka, Diary
"Were you a Nazi?" The American sergeant who asked me this was sitting back in his chair, his feet in his combat boots up on the table. I stared spellbound at the crepe rubber soles, with gravel stuck in their grooves. Between the windows hung a swastika flag riddled with bullet holes, and on the wall was a shot-up picture of Hitler. In addition to the sergeants, there were two or three young officers in the room, all of whom looked very well-fed. Revolvers dangled from their hips on long straps. From a purely visual standpoint, I liked the uniforms of these soldiers; they seemed both practical and flattering.
"Well, I repeat, were you a Nazi?" the sergeant interrupted my train of thought. I had deliberately hesitated for a moment, thinking that perhaps Alfred's fate might depend on my answer. But this was the enemy, or at least had been the enemy for years, and what business was it of his that a once-cherished ideal had turned into the bitterest disappointment? "Sure," I said with a certain defiance.

"Congratulations," said a captain, "at least one of them." Now a third man joined in: "What about Belsen and Buchenwald?" he asked, his voice tinged with bitter hatred. ****"That's terrible, if it's true," I said. "I heard about these conditions for the first time after the war ended." "To hell with you damned Krauts!" the captain exclaimed again.
"That's the last straw, you can't fool anyone with that! Thousands of people were gassed and burned, and now none of you want to know anything about it." "I've heard of camps," I admitted, "Dachau and Oranienburg, for example. But never the others!" The captain stood up and slapped his forehead with his hand. "Buddies, did you hear that?" "They knew nothing, nothing about the millions of Jews who were killed." "As God is my witness, no," I said truthfully. "I thought the rumors were enemy propaganda." I could see that they didn't believe me, but at least they weren't laughing anymore. I realized, however, that it would be futile to try to explain to them the different worlds that existed in the Third Reich.
"What about this?" asked the sergeant again, a black-haired giant. He dangled a Mother's Cross†††† in front of my eyes; he wore three watches on his hairy wrist. "That's another reason we despise you." "Well," I said, "my mother received this cross because she had seven children, and with the cross she was served first in the store when she went shopping." This practical view seemed to make sense to him, and he put the Mother's Cross back on the table. Tired of the questioning, I briefly described to the captain who we were, where we were staying, and asked for permission to return to Germany. "For the time being, you and Mrs. Keitel are to consider yourselves prisoners," he said, "but I will see that you can return to Berchtesgaden." As I left, I heard them laughing cheerfully, and one of them called out, "Four points for each of them!" Later I learned that points were awarded for prisoners from the upper class, and 80 points earned home leave.
No sooner had I arrived at the farm than three jeeps drove up to the house. The confiscation of the official cars was handled in a very proper manner; Mrs. Keitel kept hers, as it was private property. The journey first took us to Salzburg, where we were given the honor of staying at the Hotel Bristol. None of us had eaten anything really warm for a week and we were hungry. I plucked up my courage, went down a back staircase, and looked for the kitchen. The smell of spaghetti made my mouth water, and I asked the chef if he
any leftovers. Surprised, he asked why I spoke English, and when he heard that my mother was English, he handed me a pot of cooked pasta, corned beef, fat, and two loaves of white bread. Full of pride, I brought my booty upstairs, and the mood visibly lifted. "Where are you going again?" asked the staff doctor, chewing with both cheeks. "Nothing is free," I said, "I promised the sergeant that I would have my picture taken with him."
The next morning, we were taken to Berchtesgaden, the victors' star-spangled banner fluttering on the jeep. Where could my husband be? Today was his birthday. If he was being treated as well as we had been so far, I had nothing to worry about. The arrival of our small convoy at the former Reich Chancellery, now the headquarters of the 101st Airborne Division, caused quite a stir. GIs playing baseball and sunbathing came over and stared curiously at the jeep. We got out, Mrs. Keitel calmly walked past a young soldier lounging in a deck chair and said calmly and firmly, pointing her index finger: "This is my house." The boy's mouth remained open in astonishment as he slowly and awkwardly got up. Then the lieutenant colonel who had driven us there returned: "I'm sorry, ma'am," he said very politely. "General Taylor has taken up quarters here, but he has instructed me to find accommodation for you both in the town." He took us personally to the mayor, who was understandably less than pleased to be hosting what he considered to be more "top Nazis" in his already politically troubled community. He reluctantly issued us with a quartering certificate. Thanks to the chivalry of General Maxwell Taylor, the defender of Bastogne, we found ourselves in the stylish and spotless villa of the Amort family instead of in some refugee camp. We would like to take this opportunity to thank both of them.

Incidentally, the Amorts were also happy to have Germans in their house, as this meant their furniture was safe. But my feeling that the end of the war would not be so simple proved to be correct. At night, we were awakened by loud banging on the door; newly arrived troops were claiming the villa as their quarters. I explained the situation and asked to be taken to their commander. The same situation as in Hallein, swastika flag, shot-up picture of Hitler on the wall. But this time my counterpart was a fanatic. "That would suit you Krauts!" he shouted. "Now
living in a villa, while I had to live in a foxhole for months, yes, in a foxhole! And you gangsters also killed my brother!" My face turned red. "Listen!" I shouted. "It was war, after all. No fewer than six men in our family were killed, including my brother, and then think of Dresden and Hamburg. Hundreds of thousands burned to death there, almost at the end of the war, and civilians too!" "You followed your leader like rats!" he yelled back. "You're all criminals, every last one of you!" "We fought for our country!" I shouted. "Just like you!" He shook his head and shouted the names Belsen and Buchenwald at me, and now new names I hadn't heard before were added, Birkenfeld and Mauthausen, and unimaginable numbers of dead. Now I became uncertain, I lost my footing here. So I quickly left the room and slammed the door behind me. What madness it had been to come here to Berchtesgaden of all places – but where to go now, and with Mrs. Keitel, who was ill? I considered walking to the Reich Chancellery, when I saw the lieutenant colonel who had been so helpful yesterday driving toward me in his jeep. He had obviously heard about the collision, asked me to get into his jeep, and took me back to Amorts. And now there was a sign at our entrance gate that meant more than anything else at that moment: "Off limits." "Now you are perfectly safe," said the young officer after signing his name under the sign. Then he offered us food, but it seemed right to me to decline. A roof over our heads was enough. On the other hand, I mustered the courage to ask a question that had been haunting me all these days: "Do you think Keitel and Jodl will be considered war criminals just because they belonged to Hitler's military staff?" He thought for a moment: "I don't believe so," soldiers would hardly be brought before a court. A weight was lifted from my heart.

Now it was time to take care of food. The shops were still closed, and the Salzburg rations had been used up. "There are supposed to be potatoes in the basement of the Strubkaserne," a Foreign Office official who had managed to escape the clutches of the CICXconfided in me. We set off

* Counter Intelligence Corps, the US military counterintelligence organization.

With backpacks on our backs, we slipped unnoticed through a gap in the fence into the courtyard and from there into the cellar. After searching for a while, we found the potatoes. Potatoes? A foul-smelling, wet pile with long green shoots, but every now and then our hands would grasp a firm tuber. Soon the backpack was full. Suddenly there was loud swearing, and through the basement window we watched as a small, furious sergeant made a woman empty a sack of potatoes. We raced down the dark hallway, cautiously peered around the corner of the house, and then it happened: "Stop you bastards!" the fat little sergeant yelled at us. My hands were shaking with rage as we had to empty our backpacks.

The next day, the bakeries opened and food ration cards were issued. We took turns standing in line, each for about an hour; after about seven hours, it was my turn to present our ration cards. The first bread after the end of the war! I carried it home like a treasure, three slices for each of us. Mrs. Keitel measured the slices with a ruler, and everyone thought theirs was the smallest. And Putzi shared our ration with me.

The next morning, I was summoned to the CIO. "Were you a Nazi?" I couldn't bear to hear this primitive question, which I had been asked so many times before, and silently presented my registration card, the "short questionnaire." The captain in front of me read it carefully. "So you weren't a PGL, but your husband surely was?" "The Wehrmacht was prohibited from any political activity, such as voting or party membership," I explained to him. "But after the assassination attempt in 1944, Hitler awarded my husband the golden party badge, which automatically made him a member." "Have you read Mein Kampf?" "No." "Did you want to win the war?" "Of course," I said, still very uninhibited at the time. "But it had long since been lost, so why did you continue to fight?" "We hoped for a rift

between the Western powers and the Russians, perhaps also for the wonder weapons." - "I would wager my fortune and my life that there will never be a rift. Did you know about the gassing of Jews?" - "No." - "No one will ever believe you. You may go, but you may not leave the city. Is that clear?" - "Yes."
* Party member (of the NSDAP).
Shortly thereafter, I heard that Kesselring had returned with his staff and was staying at the Berchtesgadener Hof. I was able to pass the American posts unhindered and learned from a general staff officer that the staff under General Westphal was carrying out demobilization in the south. "Do you know anything about my husband?" "We have just received a radio message from the Colonel General in Flensburg. He is currently carrying out the overall demobilization on behalf of the Allies." In a low voice, he added, "Field Marshal Keitel was arrested yesterday." I asked if a greeting from me could be added to a radio message—yes, that would be possible. Then I asked the officer to come with me to inform Mrs. Keitel of her husband's arrest myself. The next morning, Kesselring's staff showed me a radio message from Jodl with a postscript: "My wife should stay where she is and help where she can."
"Dönitz and High Command taken prisoner at Flensburg" was the headline in the newspapers on May 23, 1945. The GIs from the surrounding houses sent me the Stars and Stripes newspaper every day, so I stayed up to date. I read that a control commission from the Western powers had arrived first, followed two days later by a Russian commission led by General Truskow. Dönitz, Jodl, and Admiral von Friedeburg had been summoned to the residential ship "Patria," where the Allied Control Commission had its headquarters. American Major General Lovell Rooks had informed them of their capture. "Gentlemen, I have received instructions from the Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower, to inform you this morning that he has decided, in agreement with the Soviet High Command, that the acting German government and the High Command of the Wehrmacht, together with its members, are to be taken prisoner of war..."
That was the end of the Dönitz government. General Rooks then asked Jodl if he had any documents with him. Without saying a word, Jodl handed him several files, including his diary, which would later play such an important role in the trial. Dönitz left the ship with the words: "Then we have nothing more to lose." His conviction that he would be treated as an officer according to the rules of the Geneva Convention
was not shared by his comrade von Friedeburg. The admiral committed suicide after witnessing the undignified manner in which the Reich government had been taken into custody. Dönitz's adjutant, Captain Lüdde-Neurath, later gave a vivid account of what happened:
"Shortly after the meeting began, English soldiers armed to the teeth with drawn machine guns and hand grenades burst into the hall. First action: 'Hands up!' Second action: 'Pants down!' Then the examination mentioned earlier, which was carried out individually in our case, was carried out in a circle. Afterwards, everyone was herded together in an undignified manner in the courtyard, where they had to stand with their arms raised for an excessively long time. After being taken to the police station, another search took place, including of our luggage. I coined the term 'organized looting'* for what really happened. At first, it was not yet known where the highest German leadership had been taken."
There came a time when the motto was: wait and survive, survive and wait. Wait and hate. No, not hate. In order to understand the situation of the defeated, the humiliations, it was apparently appropriate to experience it firsthand. And there were differences everywhere. One day, begging children were seen receiving bowls of leftover food; the next day, a hater poured pounds of food onto the lawn in front of outstretched arms.
Daily life revolved around food, now with a certain routine. Mrs. Keitel cooked, I fetched it. If the 1,200 calories I was allowed at the time made me dizzy, the rumors I heard while standing in line made me no less dizzy, even if they did provide some variety: who had been raped, who had committed suicide, who had fraternized; who had collaborated with the Americans, whose house had been looted, who had known the outcome of the war beforehand, who had always been "against" it, and finally, who

knew of a substitute: sauce substitute, soup substitute, jam substitute! If only there were a substitute for me, I thought, as my legs slowly went weak from standing. One said, "Better bombs than this," another, "Now it's our turn." And the third went and denounced. No mail, no news from husband or family, from parents, siblings, neighbors, friends. We floated like a bad

Left: Luise Jodl's parents, Robert and Kate von Benda.
Below: The house of her childhood in Rubkow in Pomerania.

Alfred Jodl
Left: As a cadet.
Bottom left: In World War I.
Bottom right: As a mountaineer.
Right:
Top left: Colonel General Franz Halder, Chief of the Army General Staff from 1938 to 1942.
Top right: General Ludwig Beck, Chief of the General Staff of the Army from 1935 to 1938.
Bottom: Colonel General Werner Frhr. v. Fritsch, Commander-in-Chief of the Army (1st) from 1935 to 1938, and General Beck.

Left side:
Top left: Luise Jodl in Fontainebleau during the French campaign. In the wicker chair is Major Reinhard Gehlen.
Top right: In Gargnano with Anna Maria and Romano Mussolini, the Duce's youngest children (second and third from left).
Bottom: At Army Headquarters in Forges, Belgium.
Right side:
Left: Irma Jodl, née Bullion, the general's first wife.
Right: Franz von Benda, the author's brother, as a lieutenant.

Left: Situation briefings at the Führer's headquarters.
Top (from left to right): Hitler, Göring, Jodl, Jeschonnek.
Bottom: Keitel, Hitler, Jodl.

Right: Colonel General Alfred Jodl in Reims.
Top left: Luise and Alfred Jodl towards the end of the war.
Top right: Colonel General Alfred Jodl presents the signed unconditional surrender of the German Wehrmacht.
A filled gas balloon on the victorious powers' string. But we were alive!
I looked at my fingers; they still bore the black stamp ink. We were now all divided into groups, and it must have been really difficult for the occupying forces to distinguish which groups to assign people to, where malicious opportunism began and where genuine helpfulness offered itself. We heard grotesque stories: an old man with the marks of a horse bite had complained to the Americans that he had been abused in a concentration camp. They had melted with pity and fed him one cognac after another. "I didn't wake up for two days," he told me proudly.
I kept in touch with the staff of the 101st Airborne Division, and the often-heard phrase "What can I do to help you" left a lasting impression of sympathy for Americans in me. The division doctor told me, "Until I came to Europe, I thought most of what I heard about Germany was propaganda. But what I saw in the concentration camps exceeded anything I ever thought possible." He showed me photographs from the camps. They were terrible, so unspeakably terrible that they haunted me even at night. Slowly, I began to understand the hatred and also that much of what the press and radio reported daily, almost hourly, must simply be true. Had Alfred known about this? I couldn't imagine it.
One day, Mrs. Amort called out to me, "Someone from the newspaper is here, they want an interview." I went into the parlor with the beautiful old oil painting and found two extremely attractive young people sitting at the table in the corner. The young woman in the khaki shirt—I believe it was Margaret Higgins, who later became famous for her reporting on Korea—offered me cigarettes, and her companion, a Scotsman, asked if he could smoke his pipe. We sat opposite each other and I thought, "What nice young people, we should get along well." At first, the topics were general, but then it happened: the young woman took photographs out of her bag, pictures from the concentration camps, and spread them out like a fan on the table in front of me. "No," I thought sadly, "there can be no understanding. What can be seen on these postcards must simply form an insurmountable barrier between us." "What did you think of Hitler?" It was not easy
to answer the trick questions of my intelligent counterpart, presented with such a winning smile. I wanted to be sincere, but at the same time win ground for Alfred. So I was grateful when Mrs. Keitel came in—now we were talking about the role of women in the Third Reich. "A woman's place is in the kitchen," Mrs. Keitel said in a stern tone. The Scotsman glanced triumphantly at his pretty colleague. "You are right, ma'am." And now these two attractive young people stood up again and said goodbye with a smile. "Why did you fight for so long?" the Scotsman wanted to know from me. "Think of 'unconditional surrender,'" I replied. "Think of Churchill's words after Dunkirk. And then, above all, we were still hoping for a rift between you and Marshal Stalin." "Hahhah," he exclaimed amusedly, "if you give him the title of marshal, you seem to think very highly of him." What to say? "Well," I said, "I think that despite all his unscrupulousness, he wanted and achieved great things for his people." I had accompanied them to the garden gate. The Scotsman knocked out his pipe and got into the jeep with his pretty companion. They drove away, waving. I watched them sadly.
Thank God I still had a little money and was glad that Alfred had thought of that. One day, a staff assistant who was penniless asked me for advice. We thought about it, and when I heard that bed linen made of dirndl linen could be "borrowed" from the Strub barracks, we went there and got some fabric and upholstery material. Then I designed a pattern based on the emblem of the 101st Airborne Division: a life-size kangaroo that stood in front of the Reich Chancellery. Our model was about the size of a hand, well stuffed, and could even sit. We embroidered "Souvenir from Berchtesgaden" on the red fabric pouch. When the staff assistant offered the little kangaroo made of dirndl linen to an American sergeant for sale, he immediately ordered 50 pieces at 5 marks each. I now became ambitious

for my protégé and designed a kangaroo mother twice as large with babies in her pouch, one of them a little Russian with a hammer and sickle. It earned the staff assistant 25 marks.
In July, the Potsdam Conference began. I could hardly imagine it all: the election defeat of England's hero Churchill, the Big Three in Potsdam Castle, and finally the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.
I only really returned to life, to a truly inner life,
only when I met people with whom I could have a real conversation. They became friends to whom I owe an infinite debt.
I met Professor Herbert Kraus and his wife Tilly in the daily "queue." He—an internationally renowned expert in international law—had been forced to emigrate during the Third Reich. In Dresden, the couple had lost their small children in the firestorm of the bombing raids, but found them again as if by divine providence. The old man looked so miserable that one day a child offered him bread on the street. I greatly appreciated that these two lovely people, who had gone through such a difficult time during the Third Reich, took such an interest in me, and every conversation was a gain. Professor Percy Ernst Schramm sometimes joined this circle in Schönau. He had kept the war diary for the Wehrmacht leadership from 1943 onwards, which is why my conversations with him meant so much to me. When I met him, he was sitting at the garden table in military breeches, slippers, and a sports shirt, surrounded by scattered books, working on a book about Marie Antoinette. I admired his ability to concentrate on such a distant time. "That's no problem for a historian," he said. It occurred to me to ask this scholar about my husband's relationship with Hitler, about which I knew little.
"When a new military decision was forming in the Führer's mind," Professor Schramm explained to me, "it was Jodl with whom he eagerly discussed it and from whom he obtained the necessary documents. It was Jodl who countered Hitler's objections with his own suggestions and also presented him with the concerns of the other departments." Schramm paused to think. Then he continued: "Until the end, your husband tried to act as he had been trained as an officer. It is part of his tragedy that the possibility of having a positive influence in this sense in the Führer's entourage was relatively small. The colonel general constantly strove to prevent worse things from happening. This is simply not recorded in any files and did not become apparent to the outside world. After all, the impression must never be given that the Führer was being bossed around." As a historian, Professor Schramm was interested in Alfred's childhood and youth. "It will be difficult to write a biography about your husband, because people often wondered what he was really like behind the mask he so often wore. In addition, it is generally difficult
to write biographies about generals since battles are now fought from a room with the help of teletypewriters. Only in very few cases is a leader still truly trusted by the troops, such as Dietl or Rommel. The whole development of technology is leading to a depersonalization of senior officers, and perhaps of all of us." "I was always amazed at how he physically endured this time with only one vacation," I said. "Yes," Schramm agreed, "yes, I felt the same way. But his iron constitution and perhaps even stronger nervous system certainly helped him. Your husband hardly ever had to struggle with mood swings, and when they did creep up on him, as they do on all of us, he suppressed them with the discipline he demanded not only of others but also of himself." "Do you think he saw things realistically?" Once again, the wrinkles on Schramm's forehead and the diagonal lines around his intelligent eyes lifted. "I think," he said, "that the colonel general is an optimist by nature. Difficulties spark his energy, and at the same time he takes things as they come—with equanimity, but also with great concern. However, he allowed problems that were not urgent to affect him. His optimism did not stem from rose-colored glasses, but from an inner strength, including willpower. He was far too level-headed to succumb completely to the Führer's suggestive influence, and shielded himself from it with reality." "Did he express his real opinion to the staff?" "No. And perhaps one or two may have had the impression that the Colonel General had fallen under the Führer's spell and misjudged the overall situation. But then he did not take into account that the Chief of the Wehrmacht Command Staff felt obliged to wear a mask and keep his concerns to himself, and even to support those who had doubts. A

good leader must also have something of an actor about him, he once said in a speech to his closest circle of colleagues. He saw it as his duty to speak to his officers from time to time in order to do his part to keep them going. His calmness and objectivity had a powerful effect, and on occasion he almost frightened us with the relentless seriousness of his presentation. But even in his closest circle, the colonel general never spoke of what might happen. That would have seemed unbecoming of an officer." "And how did that affect
you personally?" "Well, it was impossible to ignore that under the pressure of war, Jodl developed a certain stubbornness that is part and parcel of being a military leader because it makes you crisis-proof and, consciously or unconsciously, more one-sided. But if he didn't see things correctly, it wasn't because he was wearing the wrong glasses, but because he viewed them from a purely military standpoint and did not take sufficient account of political and psychological factors. Being clear and unambiguous by nature, empathy and intuition for the behavior of others were not necessarily his strong points."

It meant a great deal to me to learn so much about Alfred from this historian with his extraordinarily human way of thinking. And slowly, slowly, through these conversations with my friends, I regained the balance that had been thoroughly lost through the exhaustion of the last few months. Yes, at times I even felt that, despite all my worries about my husband, family, and friends, there was something completely new in this period of improvised living, a feeling of liberation and a new beginning.

And then there was another consolation, my little dog Putzi. Despite the meager food, Putzi was always cheerful and helped me overcome gloomy hours time and again. Kipling's verses often crossed my mind: "Four feet said, I am coming with you." . . . Only when the rain pattered against the window did she turn over three times on her pillow, a clear sign that she did not want to talk. "Take it easy!" this gesture seemed to say. "Take it easy! Everything will pass, the rain and this time of waiting." Take it easy! But was that possible?

3.

War criminal?

"The fact that I embodied the fate of our cause for my comrades had to determine my behavior and impose something on me that I could no longer change."

Charles de Gaulle, "Memoires de guerre"

Since American soldiers from the surrounding villas supplied me with newspapers almost daily, I was able to get an idea of the mood abroad. I gained the impression that the wave of hatred was directed almost more against the officers, the "militarists," than against the party and politicians.23 Almost every day, one could read new versions of what should happen to the officers: "General Staff indefinitely exiled," "segregation of German officers to the Fireland" (I already saw myself among penguins), "automatic arrest," etc. At first, I took this more as propaganda, but then in early June I read in Stars and Stripes that a number of senior officers, including Jodl, had been taken to an internment camp in Mondorf, Luxembourg, along with leading politicians and party officials. The report also stated that, contrary to the Geneva Convention, the officers were by no means being treated as prisoners of war, but as convicts. At night, I had the idea of writing to General Eisenhower. I asked him to allow me to testify in court so that I could speak about my husband. It seemed unthinkable to me that Jodl could have committed any crime.

How could I send this letter? I thought of the War Crime Investigation Center; perhaps they could advise me. "What can I do for you?"—this appealing American expression of human helpfulness, I found it even here. Captain Palmer, head of the office, read my letter and
agreed to forward it. "I have no sympathies whatsoever for you Germans, but I understand your situation." At the time, I had no idea that the reply from Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, General Bedell Smith, would later help me in an emergency in Nuremberg.

The report from Mondorf had depressed me so much that I felt the need to see the Chiemsee, which Alfred loved so much, again and also to find out whether our friends still lived there. Bypassing the

checkpoints, I hitchhiked there with trucks. When they greeted me, the look on their faces made me fear the worst. "Don't you know yet?" they all asked at once as I dropped my backpack wearily. I shook my head. "Oh, dear God. Your husband has been taken to the Palace of Justice in Nuremberg, along with Keitel and others. A trial for war crimes is to take place there." "Who are the others?" I wanted to know quickly, "are they all soldiers?" "No, not at all. It's a mixed bunch. Party members, Ribbentrop, Streicher, Kaltenbrunner, and of course Göring. How did your husband get involved?" The ground seemed to sway beneath my feet. I had expected Jodl to receive a long prison sentence, possibly even exile, but never that he would be lumped together with the Nazi leaders.

I decided to hitchhike to Nuremberg immediately. But since there were no trucks on Sundays, I rowed to Fraueninsel to bring Alfred flowers from there. Old friends and new ones, such as Dr. Wilhelm Ritter von Schramm, but also complete strangers helped me. At dawn, I stood on the highway with a carton of cigarettes in my hand. The first car that approached in the fog stopped. "Where to?" "Nuremberg." "Here, the whole pack is yours!" "Be careful at the checkpoints," said the driver, "it's always the same story." I was lucky. It started to rain, and I dug myself a kind of cave between the loaded cabbages and made it into Nuremberg unscathed.

It was pitch black when I got out of the car, stiff, soaking wet, and dirty, in front of the train station. Everything was dark, except for the windows of the Grand Hotel, which was still standing and apparently serving as American quarters, shining brightly. Shadowy figures sat and lay among the ruins of the station building, flotsam from the collapse. I asked for the station manager
and was referred to the St. Lorenz parish office. I began to look for the way there. But there were only narrow paths between the rubble; I couldn't find any streets. I felt my way forward with my hands between iron bars and cement blocks. A repulsive stench emanated from the rubble, almost like the smell of corpses. After a while, I saw the shadowy outlines of a large building, a church tower. That had to be St. Lorenz. But how could there be life in this dead world of burnt-out facades? I walked around the church; all the gates were locked. I began to call out, tentatively at first, then louder, to encourage myself. Suddenly, a jeep raced up, its bright headlights making this dead world seem even more ghostly. A man got out and looked around: "This is terrible, just terrible." I wanted to speak to him, but he had already got back in, and the jeep sped away like a ghost. The rain fell steadily, and I began to shout again. Suddenly, a beam of light pierced the darkness from above, a window opened, and a voice asked who was there. I asked this voice, this comforting voice in the darkness and rain, for advice and help. "I'm coming." The window closed, and I waited at the door of the ruin. Could anyone live here? The door opened, and in the flickering light of a candle, I saw a man whose face was marked by kindness and great seriousness. "I am the wife of Colonel General Jodl," I said. "You know that he is to be tried here. Do you have any advice for accommodation?" The man—it was Deacon Wechsler from the parish of St. Lorenz—did not think long. "I have a room with a roof over it, but if you want to share it with me, it will be my pleasure and honor."

As I dried my things on the kitchen stove, I felt a sense of security that I had not felt since fleeing Berlin. Brother Wechsler described to me the bombing of Nuremberg on January 7, 1945, which had reduced the city to ashes and rubble within half an hour: "It was madness to destroy these treasures so close to the end of the war. There is no industry in the center. But when I came up from the cellar and saw the towers of our church intact in the middle of the firestorm, I could have cried with joy. God had answered our prayers." As I stretched my still stiff limbs on my bed, all these images passed before my eyes. The rain pelted against the window, but inside me there was a
deep sense of happiness to be in the same place as my husband and to have been welcomed as a guest, even though I was a stranger. "This is Christianity," I thought as I heard Brother Wechsler ring the evening bell. Only one of the bells could be rung, but what did it matter? It rang. Its sound filled the room, warm and full.

After breakfast, I went in search of food. There was no one to be seen. Only now did I realize the full extent of the destruction. Compared to the well-preserved farms of Upper Bavaria, the city looked like

a cratered landscape on the moon. I looked for a path to the market and saw a few figures disappearing into the basement of a ruin. Smoke curled from the chimney protruding through the rubble. I climbed down the stairs, and when I heard that tomatoes were for sale, I joined the queue. The conversations went back and forth, from bread rations to dried potatoes to coal rations. No one spoke of the ruins; that was over. Suddenly, I heard the words "war criminals." "Now let's see if their wonder weapons can get them out of this mess," said a rough voice. The woman who spoke was barefoot, her bare shoulder visible through a hole in her faded green cardigan. "Serves them right, those crooks," agreed a stocky man with stubble, spitting on the ground. I remained silent. I didn't remain silent for the sake of the tomatoes, but I knew how Judas must have felt.

Brother Wechsler was speechless with amazement when I returned with tomatoes. They were green, hard, and small, but what did it matter? When we meet again today, we always talk about those tomatoes, so happy were we back then!

But now to the Palace of Justice! I took the spare costume out of my backpack; yesterday's clothes were still drying. Brother Wechsler described the route to me, saying that the main road to Fürth was clear.

In Adlerstraße, prisoners of war from the Waffen-SS were clearing away the rubble, guarded by heavily armed sentries. At Plärrer, I asked a worker who was welding two pipe ends together for directions to the prison. "What do you want there?" he asked grumpily. This time I didn't remain silent. "To visit a war criminal," I said as casually as I could. "Ah, one of those, one of those!" he exclaimed. Then he put down his tools and stood up. He pushed his cap back.

"This war, this war! Both my sons were killed, and for what? And my daughter—she's an American girl!" He laughed scornfully and spat into the gutter. "I'm curious about one thing," he continued, "whether any of them in the justice system will stand up for their leader." "That will be difficult, given everything we know today," I replied, almost looking around as I did so. "But I know one thing: someone will stand up for his own actions and his people." "And who would that be?" "A soldier, Colonel General Jodl, that's my man." The worker looked at me, his face changed, he took his dented cap off his head and offered me his furrowed, dirty hand. "I didn't know the Americans brought soldiers there too. Both my boys had the EK I, one as a lieutenant in the air force, the other as a tank sergeant – Afrika Korps!" Had a handshake ever made me so proud? I couldn't see properly as I hurried along Fürther Straße.

And then I stood in front of the courthouse and stared at the rain-dark walls. Somewhere here, my husband was now sitting in a cell. I first walked around the building and tried to catch a glimpse of the prison wing in the courtyard that Brother Wechsler had told me about. But the high walls offered no passage. At the front, I found a small door open. I went up a staircase and entered a room where American officers and soldiers were sitting around, reading and smoking. I approached a captain, a tall man with a boyish, friendly expression: "I am the wife of Colonel General Jodl. May I visit my husband?" "I'm sorry, ma'am, that won't be possible," he said after a brief consultation with a colonel. "But you may write to him." I took a deep breath—so it was possible to make contact! I asked for a pencil and paper, sat down at a small table, and began—no, wanted to begin—to write. But what?

So I wrote about Lake Chiemsee, all its beauty, about Irma's grave, and that I was prouder than ever to bear the name Jodl.

The captain took the letter and left with it. I imagined him walking through some corridors to the cell where Alfred was being held. And I saw Alfred sitting on his bunk, desperate and alone. I could see it all clearly in my mind's eye, and I could also see the captain slipping the letter through the door flap . And I had to think what it would be like if I could go there myself and take him out of his cell with me. "Come," I would say, "let's start over and build something completely new out of the fateful mistake of the last few years." And the empty cell would echo with the crash of the door slamming shut.

The captain returned. "You can get an answer in the afternoon." That was more, much more than I had expected. It crossed my mind whether I, the wife of the alleged criminal, could shake hands with him, the victor. Then this captain took both my hands in his and looked at me with deep seriousness: "Ma'am, I wish to God your husband will get safely through all this."

When I re-entered the room in the courthouse that afternoon, a colonel was sitting at the desk. By then, I had learned to distinguish the rank insignia. He stood up: "Ma'am, your husband is a fine soldier." "Thank you," I said, "but since when do soldiers stand trial?" He nodded silently in agreement and handed me a letter bearing Alfred's handwriting. Was it still raining? I didn't notice, just hurried with the letter under the shelter of some roof and tore open the envelope. After months, the person I belonged to finally spoke to me again:

"Until now, I have endured everything stoically, but when your fresh letter arrived this morning, with the flowers from the grave, it almost knocked me over... Now nothing can happen to me anymore, everything is so easy since I have this connection. How proud we can be of our clean life for our country..."

I felt the warmth of the hand that wrote this, but also what was left unsaid—the deep concern, the shame, and the loneliness.

At the rectory, I wrote a detailed reply and explained to Alfred that I had to return to Berchtesgaden because of food ration cards and, above all, because of the controls. I left the letter, and two more in reserve, with Brother Wechsler, who was to deliver them to the prison.

When I arrived in Berchtesgaden, I first looked for a way to send the letters, and once again it was Captain Palmer of the War Crimes Commission who promised to help me. Palmer was a pilot, and with his very dark, intelligent eyes, he could have been mistaken for a southern Frenchman. "I have heard from

a captured stenogram shows that your husband knew nothing about Buchenwald," he told me.

The next day, friends brought me a copy of Stars and Stripes with the headline: "Will Keitel and Jodl cheat the gallows?" The article was written by Pierre Huss and described how the two officers had had their epaulettes cut off in prison under humiliating circumstances. How must Alfred be feeling now? For the first time, I became aware of the possibility of a death sentence. From that day on, this knowledge never left me for a single hour. A silent ghost, appearing and disappearing, shadowy and hateful. And then—in the darkest hours—almost a friend.

Once again, I packed my rucksack, stocked up on food as best I could, and hitchhiked to Reichenhall. A truck loaded with salt took me to Nuremberg. In Ingolstadt, a young passenger held his registration card upside down to the checkpoint. "Here, you black pig, you can't read it anyway." "You're mistaken," came the reply in flawless German, "I'm a lecturer in philology and speak five languages." The boy turned red to the roots of his hair.

In the Palace of Justice, I found everything very changed; apparently, the active troops had been withdrawn, and now the occupying forces had taken over. The building was cordoned off by MPs, and an officer with a Polish name was sitting in the waiting room. When I asked for a letter from Colonel General Jodl, the lieutenant replied scornfully, "There is no Colonel General Jodl, there is only a war criminal of that name." The blood rushed to my head: "Listen, if we had won the war and treated your General Eisenhower like this, in violation of the Geneva Convention, and I'm sure we wouldn't have done so, what would you say then?" He grinned mockingly, but remained silent and pulled a letter for me out of the drawer.

Who and where was Pierre Huss, who had written this terrible article about the gallows? I learned from the doorman at the Grand Hotel that he was staying there. I wrote a few lines and asked for an interview. Huss came down the stairs to the lobby, every gesture that of a victor, and sat down at the round table without a word. I showed him the newspaper with the article. "Is what

what you wrote"—I couldn't bring myself to say the word "gallows"—"is that your personal opinion or that of public opinion in America?" "Both," he said calmly, lighting a cigarette and looking at me with

the same hateful expression I had noticed in the military police at the courthouse. "Don't you see any difference between soldiers who fought for their country and those who are responsible for the crimes against the Jews and in the concentration camps?" I asked. "Not the slightest. You are all equally guilty." I got up and left the hotel. Now I knew what was at stake and what had to be proven in this trial.

4.

Important letters in divided Germany

"The plow goes over hundreds of thousands..." Frank Thieß

Since my escape from Berlin, I had heard nothing from my parents in Potsdam, nor did I know anything about my five siblings, who had been scattered to the four winds. This complete isolation depressed me so much that I decided to hitchhike from Nuremberg to Kassel, where the mother-in-law of my fallen brother Franz had lived.

I left a few letters for Alfred with the deacon and, to my great delight, was also allowed to send a pot of begonias.

A truck took me as far as Kitzingen, where I waited at the side of the road for new opportunities. Suddenly, a large open American truck stopped. "Hi, you come along!" A tall, oil-stained driver leaned out and waved us three waiting people over to him: a priest in a black cassock, a sailor in a submarine uniform, and me. In no time at all, we were sitting up top. The journey took us through the charming Franconian countryside, but at such a frightening speed that the sailor tried in vain to pick apples from the trees lining the road. Shortly before Aschaffenburg, the driver stopped. "Have a drink." We looked at each other knowingly and carefully emptied the bottle of schnapps. The priest wiped his forehead. "Every moment I thought we were going to hit a tree." When the sailor returned the empty bottle to the driver, the latter grinned and showed him two more full bottles under his seat. "Later we'll reach the Spessart," the sailor reassured us, "and he won't drive faster than 20 knots there."

When we arrived in Frankfurt, we were astonished to hear

that there was a train going to Hamburg. A train! So we got off the truck and waited until evening. I found a reasonably comfortable spot among the ruins and looked around curiously. Hundreds of ragged and hollow-eyed refugees sat and camped in small groups next to their suitcases or cardboard boxes. In between them stood young people with long hair under caps pushed back, cigarette butts in the corners of their mouths. Three of them were negotiating with a black man in a checkered jacket who was taking cartons of Lucky Strike cigarettes out of his suitcase. "The ruins of the cities will be easier to rebuild than these ruins of a destroyed youth," said a nurse standing next to me. "I know what you mean, there are families who have been living here for weeks." She wanted to go to Hamburg, we decided to stay together until Kassel. A black wall was gathering in the sky, thunder rumbled. "We'd better get in line now!" cried the nurse. We went to the platform, where a large crowd was already waiting. We managed to push our way to the front row. Everyone linked arms so they wouldn't be pushed onto the tracks by those behind them. It started to rain. "Just one more night," said the nurse's cheerful voice. "I haven't been home in three years." Now it was pouring rain, and the people stood five rows deep like a wall. "Here it comes!" Slowly, the outline of a locomotive became visible in the darkness as the train rolled in. "There are already people in there!" "Through the window!" "Or on the roof?" "Here are some cigarettes, can you lift me up?" It was good that there was no glass in the windows. I felt myself being lifted up, pulled into the compartment, lay for a moment on the shoulders of the passengers, and gradually sank down onto my legs. Next to me, the nurse's white cap appeared. "I wonder if they can hold on to the roof?" Outside in the darkness, a merciless battle was raging. "My shoes, my shoes!" cried a woman's voice. Someone had taken the old woman's shoes off as she hung over the window frame into the compartment. A shrill whistle, a hiss, a howl from those left behind—the train started moving. A child next to me was crying. "I can't breathe." It rubbed its nose against my coat. We picked it up and put it in the luggage rack. "Our house is still standing," said the nurse's cheerful voice. "At least it was three weeks ago when Mother wrote. The apples in the garden should be ripe by now."

I felt my clothes beginning to dry, and the biting wind made the air bearable. The train stopped in Giessen, and a heavyset man pushed his way through the window. "Would you like a cookie?" he asked. "Hot dogs, fruit, bananas?" "Shut up," replied a voice. "We're sleeping." Horses sleep standing up, I thought, and sure enough, I fell asleep. "Kassel!" Pushing, shoving, pulling, I managed to get off the train just in time before it departed. Brrr, it's cold! I wanted to button up my coat, but there were no buttons left!

I had to wait on the cold platform until six o'clock before I was allowed to go out onto the street. I set off for Wilhelmshöhe. "My God," I thought when I saw the bombed-out villas, "this is almost worse than in Nuremberg." The house on Landgraf-Karl-Straße was intact, only the windows were without glass. I looked through the list of residents, which, according to the occupying forces' orders, had to be posted on every front door. I read it again, but couldn't find any of the names I was looking for. Bitterly disappointed, I was about to turn away when my gaze fell on the right half of the door, where another list of residents was posted. I read the names von Fritsch, Werner, and von Benda, and it was like a cannon salute. Here they were! Here they were! My brother's wife, who was also my best friend, her grandmother, mother, and children. I started calling out and ringing the doorbell. I will never forget this in my life: the balcony door opened, and like swallows from their nest, the four children, Brigitte, Helmuth, Rosi, and Franz von Benda, looked down from above and waved. "Where are the grandparents?" I called out. "In the Eastern Zone!" So the parents were alive! That was the most important thing. Small, firm, brown arms around my neck, round children's cheeks, a torrent of questions and shouts from bright voices: "Did you bring bread?" - "Is your dog still alive?" - "Give me your backpack." - "The four of us sleep on mattresses in the hallway, you can stay there too." - "Your coat doesn't have any buttons."

My sister-in-law told me more about their parents: the Russians had expelled them from their house in Potsdam, they had fled to the Harz Mountains and were now living with relatives there. My sister-in-law had also lived there until the Russians marched in. "Just the day before," Ruth reported, "the British drove around in tanks with loudspeakers and urged the population to stay, saying that the country would continue to belong to the British occupation zone. But thank God we packed the essentials in time and sneaked across the border. It runs close to the estate." "Do you think we could meet up with our parents at the border?" "We can try, but they were already very weak from hunger and all the excitement." "You know your way around, please come with me." I had to try to see my parents.

Two days later, Ruth and I hitchhiked towards the Harz Mountains. I took notes so that I could tell my husband about everything I had seen later. In Vienenburg, we gave money to a border crosser and asked him to take a letter to my parents on the other side. You could see the church towers of my cousin's estate from the border. "Can you be at the big barn tomorrow, at the crossroads on the border? Otherwise, please let us know how it goes." In the valley, we saw Russian soldiers patrolling with dogs. "You have to know your way around well to get across unnoticed," said an old woman who was passing by. "The border runs through our field, so we're allowed to cross every day. If you get caught, it's over," she added. Behind us, a British tank rattled along. The hatch opened and a British sergeant with a beret and moustache stuck his head out: "This is no man's land, no one is permitted to stay here. Go on!" We looked at each other, Ruth shrugged her shoulders. Was this still our Germany, where you couldn't see your parents without risking being taken away by the Russians?

We waited two more days for news, then gave up. Suddenly, I was overcome by a strong sense of unease; I felt that Alfred needed me. So I had to get back to Nuremberg as quickly as possible!

There was a train to Giessen, where I had to wait. The air in the waiting room was stifling, standing was tiring, so I lay down on a bench, pulled my hat over my eyes, and fell asleep immediately. I woke up when someone took my hat away and balanced myself back on the ground. Opposite me was a group of discharged German soldiers. I heard them exchanging experiences in hushed voices. One of them, with a face like a skull, which was constantly twitching, suddenly stood up. The mask-like face opened its eyes wide

, and the skull began to give itself orders: "Company halt!" . . . "Eyes right!" ... There was now a crazy flicker in them, he tried to march in parade step through the camp, leaned his head against the wall and let out a blood-curdling scream. His comrades brought him back, now he lay sobbing on the ground, he was about 18 years old. "Everything is shit, everything is shit, everything is in vain!"
As dawn broke, I managed to get to Nuremberg on a coal train via Aschaffenburg and Fürth. As I hurried past the brightly lit Palace of Justice at night, I sensed that Alfred was in a deep depression and wrote my report that same night.
My hunch had not betrayed me. Alfred was probably very worried about my return, but above all, it was only now that he realized that he himself would be charged as a war criminal. Before my departure, he had written to me quite confidently: "I don't know of any charges yet, I have the feeling that I will be questioned more as a witness." The letter I picked up the next morning sounded very different: "Actually, for all the past months, I never considered the possibility that we might not see each other again for a long time, or even ever, until it first occurred to me in your letters. Now I have come to terms with it . . . Whether you are struck down by illness at some point or whether a few bullets against a wall remind you of a soldier's quick death, it doesn't matter . . ."
Later, I learned from him that he had been preoccupied with thoughts of suicide every day during that time. I bitterly reproached myself for staying away longer than we had agreed, but soon his letters showed his old confidence again. Only when I was sure of this did I dare to hitchhike back to Berchtesgaden, and this time I was also able to bring Mrs. Keitel her husband's first letter.
Later, I learned from Alfred that he had filed a complaint with the court during this time:
"I have now been behind bars for 13 weeks, in solitary confinement and on a diet that has caused me to lose 20 pounds. I have been degraded and humiliated, but to this day no one has shown enough justice to tell me openly what the charges against me are and ask me what I have to say about them. So I am more without rights than the worst
American criminal, yes, more without rights than an animal, for which there is an animal welfare law."
When I arrived in Berchtesgaden, I found two letters. The first mail since the end of the war! One was in my mother's handwriting and had been written on the day we were waiting at the border:
"My beloved child! You cannot imagine how happy we were when the friendly border guard delivered the letter to us. But we couldn't come. There are seven of us living in two tiny rooms. Still, it's better than in Potsdam, where we had nothing to eat. We think of Alfred with deepest sympathy and wonder how everything will turn out. Of course, you belong to him now and should think only of him; it would be sad if it were otherwise. May God protect you!"
I read the letter again, the beloved handwriting just as I remembered it. Then I took the other one, which had "Headquarters US Forces European Theater" written on the back. "How did this letter get here?" I asked Mrs. Amort excitedly. "Two Americans delivered it the day before yesterday." I carefully opened the envelope and read:
"Dear Mrs. Jodl!
General Eisenhower has read your letter with sympathy and consideration. Since General Jodl's case is in the hands of the Allied judiciary and not in those of General Eisenhower, it would be an unnecessary effort to visit this headquarters for the purpose of making a statement. However, General Eisenhower has instructed me to assure you that you will be given every opportunity to testify about General Jodl. The letter has therefore been forwarded to the relevant Allied authorities, and I will personally follow up on the matter.
Yours sincerely, Bedell Smith Lieutenant General
THE WAR CONTINUES
1.
Indictment against Hermann Göring and others
"If the man in the cell thinks about it carefully, he finds himself in a confrontation with the forces of his own historicity. They have seized him and thrown him into this cell, and he must stand before them."

Werner Somhart

On October 20, 1945, radio and press reports announced that the indictment had been handed to the prisoners in Nuremberg. I packed my winter clothes to hitchhike to Nuremberg. In Reichenhall, I met Professor Herbert Kraus and his wife Tilly, both looking for a ride to Göttingen. "This time your husband is in the front line," said Herbert Kraus, his eyes very serious beneath his bushy eyebrows. First, I had to find a place to stay in Nuremberg. The good luck that had been with me on my first trip in August remained faithful to me, and a Franconian family in Erlenstegen took me in. Now it was time to find a suitable defense attorney. In his last letter, Alfred had suggested a friend of the family, the legal historian Professor Heinrich Mittels. Mittels had been forced to leave the University of Munich in 1934 after a clash with the Reich Student Leadership and had accepted a position in his native Vienna. After the annexation of Austria, the Gestapo had visited him several times, and without Jodl's protective hand, he would hardly have been spared the concentration camp. Mittels later accepted a position in Rostock. However, since we did not know how he had survived the Russian occupation, we decided against asking him to defend me.

I recently discussed the question of defense with Dr. Schlögl, the chairman of the Red Cross in Nuremberg.

"Why don't you ask Professor Exner, with whom I studied in Munich? He is a criminal lawyer and has a reputation in his field. He also lectured on international law in Munich, which could also be valuable. Above all, knowing him as I do, I think he would be a man who would stand up for the colonel general." I wrote this suggestion to my husband and was surprised to learn from his reply that he knew Exner: "We met about 20 years ago at the home of my uncle, the philosopher Jodl, in Vienna. I was very impressed by this man's personality and knowledge at the time, and I couldn't imagine anyone better."

I went to the Palace of Justice to submit the application for Professor Exner's admission as defense counsel to the General Secretariat of the International Military Tribunal. Once again, the atmosphere had changed. The delegations of the victorious powers had arrived, and all languages could be heard in the corridors. The General Secretariat was on the second floor, and a military policeman took me there. On the way through the long corridors, I noticed many German names on the door signs. I entered a room with the name "General Gill" on the door. Gill is my mother's maiden name, which made me like the man before I had even seen him. In a very matter-of-fact and almost amiable manner, the general answered all my questions and took me to a lawyer, Dr. Wechsler, to discuss the form of the application. "Your husband has already received a list of defense attorneys from Captain Neave." "Is Professor Exner from the University of Munich on the list?" "Let me check. No. But if your husband wants Professor Exner as his defense attorney and he is willing, the court will certainly have no objection." I filled out the forms—if Exner refused, we would have to see what else we could do. "Incidentally, I know Professor Exner as a very well-known criminal lawyer," said Dr. Wechsler as he accompanied me to the door. It all seemed like a good omen to me.

As I turned the upper corner of the corridor, I suddenly found myself face to face with two Waffen-SS men, the large PW:: ' on the backs of their camouflage jackets. They probably belonged to

* Prisoner of war.

the prisoners who were clearing away the bomb debris. They leaned far out of the open window to look down into the courtyard. An inner voice told me to look down over their shoulders, and I almost gave myself away with a cry. In the courtyard, partially obscured by a wall, men, prisoners, were marching in a circle, each followed by an MP with a submachine gun. Now I recognized Alfred, and in a split second I took everything in—the leather coat, the cap over his pale face, and his deliberately upright gait. He was walking so fast that the guard behind him was swearing. Then suddenly the gray, foggy courtyard was empty again, as if a vision had been erased. The SS men with the PW on their backs looked at me: "That was them!" "Hi, you bastards!" came a sharp voice from behind, "shut that window and no talking to Fräuleins!" The American military policeman was now standing in front of me, a tall,

well-fed fellow, his jaws moving constantly as he chewed gum. "Your pass?" I had to pull myself together so as not to say something senselessly rude to his face. The humiliating sight of my husband as a criminal prisoner had suddenly, for the first time since the war began, made hatred, boiling hatred, rise up in me. "Okay, that's all right," said the guard, looking at me curiously and handing me back my ID.

In the waiting room, I was handed a letter from Alfred; I read it on the way home:

"Wherever the German people meet with the Allied court in search of the blame for the war, it is to be expected that the verdict will be recognized by the German people as just and not rejected as a violation of the German concept of justice. Nothing is more important in this process than that . . . But . . . I have been seething since I read the indictment. They are doing it like in 1918. If this war is to have had any meaning, it can only be that it will lead to the pacification of Europe, if not the world, in the long term. To this end, the violence that caused the war and brought about victory must ultimately be replaced by a law that is recognized by all sides. Otherwise, people and nations will not be any further ahead than before. Well, the Attorney General is not yet the court . . . I was enraged by the summary accusation that the defendants had personally enriched themselves in the occupied territories
. I am hearing about the real crimes for the first time now, and people will not want to believe it."

So Alfred knew nothing about the systematic extermination of the Jews! I did not yet know the text of the indictment, but if only a fraction of what the press and radio had been announcing non-stop was true, it was enough to fill the heart of every German with shame and despair. Since all the defendants were held equally responsible for all the crimes, the defense would face a difficult task in finding its way through this tangled thicket of truth and propaganda. It would have to be made clear, I thought to myself, where the real guilt lay, and where, on the other hand, men had been drawn into disastrous situations by their position during the nation's struggle for survival, without having been directly involved in crimes themselves.

When I entered the waiting room of the Palace of Justice on October 29, I saw that the first German defense attorneys had arrived. A tall, very well-groomed gentleman with white hair under his Homburg hat was talking to a colleague of about the same age in a tweed coat and Bavarian traditional hat. "I've already seen Jodl, he's waiting for you," I heard the gentleman in the bowler hat say to his colleague. Could that be Exner? I introduced myself, and it was indeed him! "May I introduce Dr. Dix, he will be defending Schacht." Then Exner took me aside. "The matter came as something of a surprise, of course. The day before yesterday, a man from the CIC came to see me in Munich and asked if I would be willing to defend Jodl before the IMT‡‡‡‡ . As you know, I know your husband from Vienna. However, I am not a practitioner, and I have to take certain precautions for my health. But if there is one case in this trial that interests me, it is that of Colonel General Jodl." I immediately felt great sympathy for this man and could imagine how well he and Alfred would get along. Exner was of medium height and strongly built; intelligent, kind eyes, with wrinkles of humor at the corners, dominated his face. A short-cropped mustache emphasized his strong-willed chin. His whole personality radiated calmness and serenity.

You had to trust this man. At the time, I didn't know that Exner would become a close friend to us over the course of a difficult year.

Exner had arranged a meeting with his client for the afternoon. I waited in the anteroom, sitting next to two ladies. When the American clergyman, Father Sixtus, entered the room—we had often spoken with each other—he looked at me in surprise: "You don't know each other?" He introduced me to Mrs. von Ribbentrop and Mrs. von Schirach. Then Exner returned and motioned for me to come with him. "I will take over the defense." He put his hand on my shoulder: "Your husband sends his regards, of course; he is doing well. I was really surprised to find him in such good spirits. This will be a good collaboration; we understood each other right away."

I showed Exner a letter from my husband: "I would like to suggest that you try to get a job as my defense attorney's secretary. He couldn't find anyone better than you! You know the organization, the

people, the campaigns. You can see for yourself the many advantages of such a position." The horizontal wrinkles on Exner's forehead deepened. "Can you write?" When he heard that I had been secretary to the German Chief of Staff for ten years, he agreed: "Let's go to the General Secretariat right away and submit the application." When Exner presented his request to the person in charge, Mr. Raymond, the latter's astonishment was clearly evident. However, he concealed it with the same amiability with which he answered the incessant phone calls in all languages. "First I have to ask General Gill." When he returned from Gill's office, he handed Exner the approval for my employment with a smile: "This is most exceptional, most exceptional." As we waited in the corridor for our ID cards to be issued, a group of Germans came up the stairs, one of them gesturing widely. "That can only be Herbert Kraus," I thought. It was him, and we fell into each other's arms. "So we meet again," he said, "I'm going to help Dr. Dix with Schacht's defense."

I proudly showed the gentlemen my passes: yellow cards for entering the Palace of Justice, red cards for the trade fair, accommodation vouchers, and even a voucher for heating fuel. To transport my belongings from Erlenstegen to my new quarters, I was also provided with an American jeep. "What about your things?" I asked Exner. "I have to go back to Munich tonight," he replied. I was shocked; it had been so nice to have someone by my side. Exner laughed when he saw my dismayed face. "I'll be back in three days at the latest. This is going to be a long and hard fight. I also want to see if I can find more support, and I was thinking of Prof. Jahrreiss, an international law expert from Cologne. But I already have a job for you. Use the vouchers to find us suitable accommodation, as close to the court as possible. See you soon, and don't lose heart!"

The next morning, I set out to find a room. In Denisstraße, about eight minutes from the Palace of Justice, I found what we needed: three rooms so close together that you only had to cross the street. My future quarters were with the Pöhlmann family at Denisstraße 30. Since these quarters had been requisitioned without further ado for court employees, I assumed that we would be welcomed with reluctance. The opposite was the case. The Pöhlmann family made me feel like one of their own, and I will be forever grateful to them for that. Father Pöhlmann, a former official at the Palace of Justice, built me a small iron stove thanks to his war experience. Mother Pöhlmann spoiled me whenever she could with apples or dumplings, and their beautiful daughter Hilde, whose room had been confiscated for me, accepted this without resentment.

When I began to suffer from nervous disorders as the trial progressed, the kind Mrs. Pöhlmann took care of me with motherly concern and spent many a night at my bedside.

Now that the question of accommodation had been settled, I requested a jeep to fetch my luggage. The MP on duty at the jeep pool, the collection point for vehicles, looked at me suspiciously at first, but a "perrrut" from the IMT was like a ticket from God. On the way back from Erlenstegen, I thought about the fact that this was the third time I had been in a jeep. Once as a prisoner in Salzburg, then on the way to General Maxwell Taylor, and now here in Nuremberg. As far as Alfred was concerned, the situation had undoubtedly worsened. Nevertheless, I felt proud and happy. After all, we had won one thing in this fight together

. For the moment, that was enough; we lived from one day to the next.

Professor Exner returned on November 16 and brought his colleague Professor Hermann Jahrreiss with him. I was working in the document room when the two of them came in. I felt the same way I had with Exner: from the very first moment, I had the feeling that I was meeting a friend with whom our cause was in good hands. "I am so happy about my two defense attorneys, who I find so personable," Alfred wrote after his first meeting with Jahrreiss.

The daily meetings between the defendants and their defense attorneys initially took place during the day, but later, after the trial began, they were held in the evening. At first, the prisoners in Room 55 were allowed to sit at a table with their defense attorneys under guard. However, on the orders of the prison commander, Colonel Andrus, who was hated by all the defendants, row cabins were soon erected from which the defendants could only confer with their defense attorneys through a barred

window. All protests were in vain. Despite these humiliating circumstances, these evening meetings remained the highlight of the day for us. "How is the client? How does he look? Did he give you anything?" These were always my first questions when I picked up the professors from the courthouse in the evening. The warmth and sympathy with which they reported gave me renewed joy every day, and they almost always brought notes on which Alfred had written short messages for me.

The defense team had now grown to 20 members, corresponding to the number of defendants, and was joined by a large number of assistant defense attorneys. After lengthy discussions, it was agreed that the defense team would formulate the fundamental legal objections to the IMT statute in a motion and have them recorded in the minutes. Professor Jahrreiss was commissioned by the entire defense team to do this, and when he dictated his draft to me late in the evening of November 18, 1945, I was very proud that Jodl's defense attorney had been entrusted with this historically important task. At the same time, while writing, I became aware of the legal problems of this trial for the first time:

"Two terrible world wars and the violent clashes that violated peace among nations in the period between

these great, global conflicts have led the tormented peoples to the realization that true order among nations is not possible as long as every nation has the right to wage war at any time and for any purpose. In recent years, world public opinion has increasingly rejected the idea that the decision to wage war is beyond good and evil. It distinguishes between just and unjust wars and demands that the international community hold to account any state that wages an unjust war ... Yes, it demands that not only be the guilty state condemned and held liable, but also that the men who are guilty of unleashing the unjust war be condemned by an international court ... Humanity wants this idea to be more than a demand in the future; it wants it to be applicable international law."

"But," the motion continued, "today it is not yet established international law. Neither the Covenant of the League of Nations, nor the Kellogg-Briand Pact, nor any other treaty concluded after 1918 in that first wave of attempts to outlaw wars of aggression has realized this idea.

The current trial, insofar as it is intended to punish crimes against peace, cannot therefore be based on existing international law, but is a proceeding based on a new criminal law, a criminal law that was created only after the crime was committed. This contradicts a principle of justice that is sacred throughout the world, the partial violation of which in Hitler's Germany was met with widespread disapproval both inside and outside the Reich. The principle is that only those who have violated a law existing at the time of the act, which threatened them with punishment, may be punished. The defense attorneys of all the defendants present would be violating their duties if they were to silently accept the abandonment of applicable international law and the disregard of a generally recognized principle of modern criminal justice, and suppress concerns that are now also being openly expressed outside Germany. This is all the more true since the defense is unanimously convinced that this trial could still serve the progress of the world order to a high degree even if it does not deviate from applicable international law.

Finally, the defense is obliged to point out another peculiarity of this trial, which deviates from generally accepted principles of modern criminal justice: the judges are appointed only by states that were parties to this war. This one party to the conflict is everything in one: creator of the court system and criminal law norms, prosecutor, and judge. The general legal conviction was that this should not be the case.

In view of the diversity and difficulty of these legal issues, the defense moves that

The court should seek expert opinions from internationally recognized scholars of international law on the legal basis of the trial based on this statute.

Only two days to go until the trial begins. The tension in all of us was mounting, and this was also reflected in Alfred's letters:

"I find it very stressful that the prosecutors are in possession of all the files and documents, including those that speak in our favor, while we have nothing more than our heads. At least I have a great deal of

knowledge about military history . . . I am bright, fresh, and alert. I know where I have to back down, but I will never do anything indecent . . . Hopefully, I will be able to control myself enough. No defense attorney will be better able to counter any attempt to portray duty, obedience, and loyalty as crimes with all the passion that I myself will. What a pity that the prosecution does not limit itself to the real crimes, but also twists moral law into injustice. So on Tuesday I will take the stand in the knowledge that I am defending my own cause, that of the German soldier."

Alfred's study on the "question of guilt" also shows how deeply he grappled with the problems of the past. Among other things, it states:

"In 1918, there was an infinite willingness to overcome purely national thinking through a Western European, perhaps even a League of Nations idea. But this required a politically stable and mature people and a great statesman in the camp of our former opponents . . . Amidst the revolutionary struggles in Germany, amidst the Versailles Dictate with all its humiliations and absurd border demarcations, amidst hardship and unemployment, all the tender green shoots that had begun to sprout on the young meadow of European understanding were trampled underfoot.

The seed that sprouted was that of the NSDAP. It was a

revolutionary party, at least as much as the Communist Party. It had three major goals: to overcome Marxism and thus the idea of class struggle, to liberate itself from the intellectual, cultural, and economic domination of Judaism, and to free itself from the shackles of the Treaty of Versailles. In addition, it despised more or less all bourgeois parties and, ultimately, the Reichswehr and its leadership. It saw the Reichswehr as an uninspired mercenary army that had also buried the idea of a people's army and ultimately served only as a political instrument of power for the government of the day. This new party, founded by unknown people, without patrons or press coverage, was originally everyone's enemy. By human standards, it could never have succeeded. Yet it did. Let it not be said that this was merely the result of very clever and sophisticated propaganda. Propaganda alone is powerless unless it is backed by an idea or impressive deeds. Nor can it be argued that no people are more easily misled than the Germans. There were deeper reasons for such success. What ultimately helped the party to victory by legal means was the inability of any other party or government constellation to achieve success in foreign and domestic policy as a result of oppressive regulations. There was a profound wisdom in the well-known caricature in a major French satirical magazine from around 1936, which read: The cause precedes the effect. It showed Adolf Hitler reviewing the parade of his new Wehrmacht. Marching ahead are the statesmen of our opponents from 1918, first the ghosts of those who have since died, followed by those who are still alive, led by Clemenceau, carrying the Treaty of Versailles like a rifle on his shoulder.

Revolutions are relentless and excessive in their objectives, and what they lack is wisdom, experience, and humility. In 1933, many ugly dregs came to the surface and caused serious concern. But no one yet knew whether this powerful development would culminate in historical greatness or end in disaster."

November 20, the day of the trial's opening, had arrived. Heavy Patton tanks drove up in front of the Palace of Justice, their long barrels aimed and ready to fire. Guards with fixed bayonets stood watch at the entrance, above which flew the flags of the

Big Four. Hundreds of cars from all nations were jammed in front of the entrance gate. Slowly and inexorably, the stream of visitors pushed past the checkpoint: Russians, Americans, French, English, Czechs, Poles, Norwegians, Canadians, Belgians, Dutch, Danes, officers of all branches and ranks, press representatives with rakish berets, elegant secretaries in sheer stockings and well-tailored uniforms. Caught up in this maelstrom, I found myself wedged between a Russian woman with broad epaulettes on her black uniform blouse and a jaunty Tartar cap and a British admiral whose chin cut through the crowd like the bow of a ship. The faces around me all wore the same expression, the satisfaction of victors, and I could smell their perfume. Passing through the bottleneck of security, this dazzling stream flooded along the corridor to the courtroom. I watched it with envy. I would have given anything to see Alfred at the opening of the trial, but my request had been denied. In the document

room, the professors tried on their robes, and I enjoyed the dignified impression they made. And then, to my delight, I spotted German naval uniforms: Fleet Judge Kranzbühler, the defense attorney for Grand Admiral Dönitz, and his assistant defense attorney, Lieutenant Commander Meckel. Because they belonged to a mine clearance unit that was still active, they had been given permission to wear their uniforms.

The document center, where the defense initially worked, was headed by Mr. Schrader, an exceptionally proper naval officer. I first requested the indictment in order to carefully read the paragraph about Jodl: "The defendant Jodl was a lieutenant colonel in the Operations Department of the Wehrmacht from 1932 to 1945, head of the Operations Department in the High Command of the Wehrmacht, major general, head of the Wehrmacht Command Staff, and lieutenant general. The defendant Jodl used his previous positions, his personal influence, and his close relations with the Führer to promote the seizure of power by the Nazi conspirators and the consolidation of their control over Germany, as stated in Count I of the indictment."

I couldn't get my head around that. I went to Mr. Schrader. "Listen," I said, "Jodl only met Hitler personally after the war began; he was even against him in 1933, as

I saw it myself! Shouldn't that be taken into account?" "Of course," said Mr. Schrader. "If your defense can prove that, this point will have to be dropped."

In fact, this charge was later withdrawn by the British prosecution.

I read on:

"He strengthened and consolidated the preparations for war, as stated in Count I. He participated in the military plans and preparations of the Nazi conspirators for wars of aggression and wars in violation of international treaties, agreements, and assurances, as stated in Counts I and II. He authorized and directed war crimes, as set forth in Count III, and crimes against humanity, as set forth in Count IV, including many different crimes against persons and property, and participated in these crimes."

I couldn't imagine what these "crimes against persons and property" might be, so I first made a list of all the incriminating documents attached to the indictment. It seemed strange to see formerly top-secret documents stamped "Chefsache" (matter for the boss), such as the landing plans against England, now in English translation.

I began to translate a document back, but didn't get very far; it was impossible for me to concentrate. I stared ahead and wondered what it looked like in the courtroom now. "Mrs. Jodl, do you know this document?" I looked up and saw a young American soldier standing in front of me with a piece of paper. "You'd better copy down the appendix," he advised me in a low voice, "you might not be able to access the document later."

The document itself contained a report on the shooting of British commandos in Norway. The appendix contained information about the commandos' equipment, including civilian clothing worn under their uniforms and armbands marked "Deutsche Wehrmacht" (German Armed Forces). The latter was prohibited under international law of war, thus presumably justifying the shooting of the commandos as saboteurs. I looked at the young soldier without being able to say a word. I knew he was Jewish and that many of his relatives had been murdered in concentration camps, and today the court had convened to hold the leading men of the regime, under which such things

. And here, one of the victims was offering me, the wife of one of the defendants, a hand in finding the truth.

I waited with great anticipation for our defense attorneys at noon. Soon the room was buzzing with reports and conflicting opinions. On the way to the mess hall and during lunch, the professors gave me a detailed description so that I had a clear picture in my mind: the large rectangular hall with wood paneling, curtained windows, and bright neon lighting. "The defendants sit in two rows on the left, with us defense attorneys in front of them," Exner explained. "Our client is sitting on the second bench between Sauckel and Papen. There is an MP standing behind each of them," Jahrreiss added. "And the court and the prosecutors?" "The eight judges are sitting opposite the defendants. Lord Justice

Lawrence, the presiding judge, and Mr. Birkett represent England, while Biddle and Parker are the judges from the USA. France is represented by Professor Donnedieu de Vabres and Falco, and Generals Volchkov and Nikishchenko serve as Russian judges. Incidentally, the Russians are the only ones in this so-called military tribunal who wear uniforms." "And the prosecutors?"
"They are grouped at four tables on the right, with Jackson at the head. Behind them is the public gallery, which is of course filled to capacity."
I then had the technical equipment described to me: everyone in the room, including the defendants, wore headphones. Using a switch lever, everyone could follow the proceedings, which were translated sentence by sentence by interpreters using simultaneous translation, in the language of their choice. That morning, point I of the indictment, the so-called "common plan," the "conspiracy," had been presented, followed by point II, "crimes against peace." "As we were leaving," Exner said, "I noticed that the defendants were allowed to talk to each other." I could imagine what a relief such a conversation must have been for Alfred after so long in solitary confinement.
As I listened to the excited babble of voices in the mess hall, I suddenly realized that the atmosphere had changed fundamentally since yesterday. Not the dining room itself. That was the same, a sober, bare former classroom where we picked up our meals on a tray. No, it was the people who had changed since this morning. At first
, everyone had treated each other with suspicious caution, almost apologizing for being defenders here. And that had changed. I felt a sense of togetherness that reminded me of the atmosphere after a bombing raid. Although opinions sometimes clashed harshly, it seemed to me that under the pressure of the wave of red-hot hatred, the small group of German defenders had been welded together into a single unit.
This impression was confirmed by a personal experience. At first, I often sat apart during communal meals to relax from work and emotional impressions. I found a suitable refuge in a student desk. On the ink-stained lid of the desk were multiplication tables and, in red ink, the words: "We have been." I used to demonstratively place my tray on this ambiguous word, with my bag underneath to keep it level. I also sought out this refuge because on my first day in the cafeteria, one of the senior defense attorneys had complained that the wife of a "war criminal" was eating there. Today, I sat down with the professors again so as not to miss a word of their descriptions. The lawyer from Hamburg nodded to me friendly across the table. "If the first team were still alive, your husband would not be sitting in the dock today. He doesn't belong there."(25)
"Here, take a look at this, it's the indictment against Jodl," Professor Exner told me in the evening. "Our client's case will be presented by the British prosecution. Please translate it by tomorrow." As I worked, I was relieved to find that the emphasis was on Jodl's work as a general staff officer. The indictment contained 11 points:

1. Participation in promoting the seizure of power by the Nazi conspirators and in consolidating their control over Germany (this point was later dropped).
2. Participation in the secret rearmament in violation of the Treaty of Versailles.
3. Participation in the reoccupation and fortification of the Rhineland.
4. Participation in plans to attack Austria and Czechoslovakia.
5. Participation in the execution of a plan to invade Austria.
6. Participation in the execution of the plan to invade Czechoslovakia.
7. Participation in plans against Poland.
8. Participation in plans against Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Yugoslavia, and Greece.
9. Participation in planning the war against the USSR.
10. Participation in planning war crimes and crimes against humanity.
11. Crimes against humanity.

Professor Jahrreiss drew my attention to the attached list of incriminating documents: "In four cases, Jodl is incriminated solely because he was present at a meeting. We need not worry about that. The diary, on the other hand, will probably cause us all sorts of trouble."

In Nuremberg, but also in today's historical literature, there has been a great deal of confusion about the meaning of Jodl's diaries. The diary so often cited in Nuremberg – Doc. No. PS 1780 – is, despite its title "Official Diary," in fact the only one of a private nature. It covers the period between 1937 and 1939 and provides important insights into such significant events as the crisis surrounding Field Marshal von Blomberg, Colonel General Frhr. v. Fritsch, and the Sudeten crisis prior to the Munich Agreement. In addition to factual entries, the notebook in its green file cover contains emotional thoughts that, in the context of the indictment, had to be considered highly political. When Jodl voluntarily handed over the notebook to the Allies upon his capture in Flensburg "for the sake of historical truth," he could not have known that this diary would play such a significant role in the charges against him. The prosecution deliberately quoted only what could be considered negative, such as his admiration for Hitler, and just as deliberately overlooked the fact that Jodl was a colonel in the General Staff at the time of writing, a young department head in the Wehrmacht office without any political influence. In other diaries written later, which are more like notebooks, there are no longer any emotional entries about Hitler as a person.

Meanwhile, Chief Justice Jackson, the American chief prosecutor, had declared:

"In the dock sit 20 broken men, humiliated by those they once led, reviled almost as bitterly as by the misery of those they attacked . . . Looking at these pitiful figures sitting here before us as prisoners, it is hard to imagine the power with which they once ruled a large part of the world as Nazi leaders . We must approach our task with such inner superiority and intellectual integrity that this trial may one day appear to posterity as the fulfillment of humanity's longing for justice."

Yet in May 1945, Jackson had warned the International Law Guild that a trial should not be conducted for non-legal purposes!

On November 29, 1945, a film about the concentration camps was shown in the courtroom as evidence. At lunch, there was speculation that some of the images were staged. But what was seen in the press was enough, and I could sense Alfred's shock in his letter:

"These facts are the most terrible legacy that the National Socialist regime has left to the German people. This is much worse than the destruction of German cities. The ruins could be considered honorable wounds from a people's struggle for its existence. But this disgrace tarnishes everything: the enthusiasm of our youth, the entire Wehrmacht and its leaders. I have already explained how we were all systematically deceived in this regard. The accusation that we all knew about these conditions is false. I could not have endured such knowledge for a single day."

On November 30, the defense attorneys came out of the session very agitated. "The first witness for the prosecution has appeared," Exner reported, "General Lahousen." I was shocked that the first witness for the prosecution was an officer. I told the professors what I knew about Lahousen: "He was the first Austrian general staff officer to report to Beck after the Anschluss and thus place himself at the disposal of the Germans. He was then immediately taken on as a general staff officer in the German Abwehr. My husband always spoke of him with particular respect and sympathy." Keitel's defense attorney, Dr. Nelte, was very serious: "Lahousen has heavily incriminated the field marshal heavily incriminated him; it concerns a conversation in the Führer's special train on September 10, 1939, where there is talk of eliminating the intelligentsia and the nobility in Poland." From the other side of the table, Dr. Dix, Schacht's defense attorney, interjected: "I think Jodl's defense can congratulate itself today. It was quite obvious that the witness did not want to incriminate Jodl; he testified that Jodl had arrived later, when the conversation had already moved on to other topics."

Under the impression of Lahousen's testimony, Jodl wrote:

"The witness is characteristic proof of the inner turmoil with which the Wehrmacht went into this war, which it did not want, and how much opposition to the revolution there was within it, which was

suppressed by the successes at the beginning but later broke through again. The tremendous tragedy for a soldier, the conflict between patriotic duty and the rejection of many of the regime's methods, is clearly evident in this testimony."

On December 5, I was sitting over a transcript of one of Hitler's directives in the document room when Mr. Schrader approached me. "I'm sorry, ma'am," he said in a low voice. "You must leave the house within ten minutes." I stared at him in bewilderment. "That's not possible, why on earth?" "General Watson ordered it, something stupid happened. Mrs. Frick sneaked into the spectator gallery and waved to her husband from there." "Please, Mr. Schrader, help me so I can stay. Who else is going to work for the defense?" Together we went to Captain Neave. "Captain," said Mr. Schrader, "I can testify that Mrs. Jodl behaved impeccably in the document room. Can't she stay?" Neave shrugged his shoulders regretfully. "General Watson will not agree to this under any circumstances. I'm sorry, it's a difficult decision." Slowly and desperately, I cleared my desk. "It's not just about the paperwork," I explained to Mr. Schrader. "If my ID cards are revoked, I'll have to go back to Berchtesgaden because of the accommodation and food ration cards." "Maybe there's still a way out," he consoled me, "wait for the defense attorneys first." But I wasn't even allowed to wait for that; I had to hand in my ID cards immediately in the anteroom. The guard was a soldier from the French division "Rhin et Danube."

At home, the stove was crackling, and Mrs. Pöhlmann tried to comfort me. But everything seemed lost to me now that we were to be separated. Suddenly, the doorbell rang frantically, I heard voices, and Jahrreiss stood in the doorway. "Everything's fine!" he called out, "You'll remain secretary at the IMT, but you must comply with one condition: you are no longer allowed to enter the courthouse." Even during the meeting, word of Watson's order had spread, and the professors had persuaded Captain Neave to allow me to remain with our team as an external assistant. Mrs. Pöhlmann brought potato dumplings to share in our joy. "Yes, yes, the professors," she said over and over again. The next day, the headline in Stars and Stripes read: "General Watson has fired Mrs. Jodl."

Alfred had heard about the incident from the German doctor Dr. Pflücker on the same day and wrote to me: "I'm not so unhappy that you were expelled from the house. I know how difficult the working conditions are, and I believe that you will work less hard on your own in a quiet room. The four of us are all pursuing the goal of gaining some distance. Almost the most interesting, but also the saddest day was today's description of how the great war came about. How we were all deceived, with what faithful idealism I went into this war, and how different the background was. Perhaps it was better that I didn't know."

What my husband did not consider in the new arrangement was the inconvenience for the defense attorneys themselves. They now had to bring the piles of files, transcripts, and documents relating to all the defendants to the mess hall every day, where I then took them home. Soon, thousands of documents were piled up against the walls of the small room. Everything had to be checked; evidence could be found anywhere.

For a reason I no longer remember, my position as secretary was once again in jeopardy about ten days later. Once again, I was asked to hand in my "permit slips." In my distress, I remembered the letter from General Bedell Smith that I had found in Berchtesgaden the previous autumn. I asked the officer on duty to read the letter. He read it carefully twice. "Wait a moment," he said and left the room. After a short time, he returned. "You

can keep your permits," he said, smiling as he handed me back General Bedell Smith's letter. "So I can remain a member of the defense team?" "Yes, okay, ma'am." "Long live General Bedell Smith," I thought. How wonderful that there was still a world where a general's letter carried weight!

To my delight, contact with the American clergy remained as lively as before. In Father Gerecke, the Protestant pastor, I found a man whose simple faith was impossible to resist. I found a much closer human connection with the Catholic clergyman, Father Sixtus O'Connor. In his uniform, with his fresh, wiry appearance, he seemed more like a young lieutenant with the world at his feet than a man whose thoughts were focused on the hereafter. It was this man's strength that his realistic contact with the

world made him understanding, understanding also of the deeper causes underlying this process. An understanding that came from a warm, fearless, helpful heart. The work of these clergymen, who fulfilled their duty without any hypocrisy—German chaplains were not allowed access—also extended beyond the borders of Nuremberg. Father Sixtus Post mediated in Rome on behalf of the wife of General Dostler, who had been sentenced to death for shooting a commando unit in Italy.
Valuable connections were also developed with American court psychologists. I must admit that I was completely ignorant in this field at the time and would gladly have these conversations again. In Dr. Kelley, I sensed a great deal of human understanding and not the hatred that Dr. Gilbert initially made no secret of at the time. However, from a letter written by this scholar, as well as from his Nuremberg diary, I now know that he changed his opinion at the time regarding the accused soldiers:
"I am not the one," he wrote later, "who would deny Mrs. Jodl's right to believe in her husband's innocence. Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly clear to me that the widows of fallen German soldiers must also be counted among the victims of Hitler's madness. I include Mrs. Jodl among them."
I only learned the details of the beneficial work of the German prison doctor Dr. Pflücker after the trial had ended. He had volunteered to care for the prisoners and had done them a great deal of good.
2.
You will have to pay
"These facts are the most terrible legacy that the National Socialist regime has left to the German people."
Alfred Jodl before the International Military Tribunal
"It cannot be our concern to minimize our guilt, for only if we have the strength to survive it with knowledge will we enjoy respect."
Alexander Mitscherlich
The trial was now underway, and all initial assumptions about its duration would prove to be wrong. In retrospect, the period of almost a year was far too short and the knowledge far too limited to arrive at a reasonably accurate finding of truth. But did that matter to the victors in this trial? At first, Jodl had gained a positive impression:
"After just a few days, I am already convinced of the objectivity and conscientiousness of the court. The prosecutors are dangerous, firstly because they are not experts in all military matters, and secondly because of their efforts to surprise us with documents we have never heard of before." . . . "All that matters to me is proving my good intentions. People can accuse me of having done everything in my power to achieve victory."
On the second day of the trial, the court responded to the submission formulated by Prof. Jahrreiss on behalf of the defense. A public reading was rejected. Thus, the protests against the statute were not recorded in the minutes, and the press was not initially informed. "The statutes were drafted in the exercise of the sovereign power of those states to which the German Reich had surrendered unconditionally, and the unquestioned right of those countries to enact laws for the occupied territories has been recognized by the civilized world." Well, as the occupying power, we had enacted our laws, and now our opponents were enacting theirs.
The defendants were then asked whether they pleaded "guilty" or "not guilty." All of the defendants pleaded "not guilty." Alfred added one more sentence: "For everything I did or had to do, I will answer with a clear conscience before God, history, and my people."
Some of the world's most renowned journalists were present at the opening of the trial: Peter de Mendelssohn for New Statesman and Nation, Louis Lochner for Chicago Tribune, Dos Passos for Life, Erika Mann for Evening Standard, William Shirer, to name but a few. Newspapers such as Daily Herald and Stars and Stripes asked me for an interview. At first, I thought I could get something out of it, but I was too inexperienced. And like a child falling into a pond, I fell into the unknown depths of trick questions. What I read about the interview the next day was so far from my intended purpose that I quickly realized it took a smarter mind and, above all, more experience to cope with these shrewd

questioners. And I was annoyed when people called me a "dull matron." Only once did I have a good conversation, as far as I can remember, with Sarah Churchill, the prime minister's niece. It was good to hear that broad circles of the British army and navy were strongly opposed to the trial of soldiers. But that was an exception at the time. The international community had largely already passed judgment on the defendants. But then the first voices of criticism reached us, and it was like a relief. At the time, such opinions were seen as a tuning fork to recalibrate our own opinions, which had become uncertain, and not to be swayed by the pressure of hate propaganda. The Basler Zeitung wrote on October 20/21, 1945:

"The Times" emphasizes that one must be careful not to describe the Nuremberg trials as a purely legal process. It is a procedure that represents a novelty, namely the transfer of ideas from formal criminal law and moral law to international law, whose objects have hitherto been only states and not rulers themselves. The paper . . . interprets the extraordinary and sovereign powers of the International Court of Justice to mean that it is free to determine

that some of the charges in the indictment constitute violations of moral law, the punishment of which is desirable but has not been possible under the legal views that have prevailed to date. This, the paper argues, means a clear departure from legal ground and an entry into the political arena."

In mid-December, I received a letter from my mother in the Harz Mountains in the Eastern Zone that deeply disturbed me. She weighed only 80 pounds, and her handwriting, which was always so clear and beautiful, was barely legible. "I would have loved to write to Alfred," I read, "but I am too weak to give him anything, even in spirit." My dear mother! Her slender, beloved figure stood before me, just as I had last seen her on that last day of April in the window frame in Potsdam. Her parents had been forced to leave their home at that time and had initially found shelter with relatives in the Harz Mountains, until the Russians expelled them from there too and quartered them in a miserable barn. As always, our Mämmchen was not thinking of herself, only of others: "How I would have loved to see you again, but you cannot abandon Alfred now. We must hope that God will grant us a reunion after all." Alfred left it up to me to decide whether I wanted to try to cross the zone border to get to her. But I knew he was concerned that I might suffer the same fate as the wife of Grand Admiral Raeder, who had been taken to the Lubyanka on the day the Russians marched into Berlin. With a heavy heart, I decided not to hitchhike there. Alfred wrote: "Never since I have been in prison has a message affected me as much as today's, and never have I felt such a longing to stroke your head and comfort you. I had so little opportunity to get to know your mother, our mother. But during the war, I sensed the greatness of her attitude, that although she was English and by nature an opponent of the system, she never wrote a word of complaint or criticism for the sake of her children, who were in the service of this state. This attitude, even after the collapse, this quiet endurance and bearing of suffering without ever saying a word about herself, elevates her to the highest level of humanity. I know that a mother's love cannot be replaced by anything; it stands alone because it never fails at any hour of life."

Although Alfred hardly knew our mother, he understood her nature completely. Perhaps it was only as an adult that I was able to grasp everything she had given us children: her constant presence without clinging, her openness to a wide variety of interests, her strong character, her gentle yet uncomplaining tenacity in crises, and her constant encouragement of her children's musical interests.

Although born in Berlin as the daughter of engineer Henry Gill, director of the Berlin waterworks, my mother was a British-born subject. Some of her ancestors were of Scottish descent; her great-uncle Aird had helped build the dam in Aswan. As children, we always had an English nanny until 1914 and thus grew up effortlessly in the Anglo-Saxon language and culture, which even two world wars could not change. My mother was very religious, without being dogmatic. She wrote to her sister that the old English hymn "O God, our hope in ages past . . . our shelter in the stormy blast" had been an indescribable source of support during the expulsion from Potsdam by the Russians.

On December 20, 1945, the court announced a recess over the Christmas holidays until January 2. Each of us was grateful for this decision. Once, our daily work had kept us busy into the night. But what was

even more evident in the faces of the defense attorneys was their mental exhaustion. It was an enormous strain to witness the presentation of new, overwhelming evidence day after day, the authenticity of which, with relatively few exceptions, could not be doubted. Everyone was aware that the events revealed in this trial would place a heavy burden on our country for decades to come, one that would be almost impossible to erase for generations. Even the thought of the hundreds of thousands of bombing victims in Hamburg and Dresden and the millions of expellees from East Germany did nothing to change this. These events were bound to have an enormously complicating effect on future politics.

It was also important to gain some distance. "You live on an island," I often heard friends say when they visited me on their travels. And that was quite true. At that time, the average German citizen, unless interned, had only two problems to deal with: not starving and not freezing to death. We members of the IMT, on the other hand,

freed from these daily existential worries thanks to the food and heating materials allocated to us, which sometimes made us feel guilty towards our friends and relatives. But this was the only way we could concentrate all our energy on finding the truth about the past. At times, we resolved to steer the conversations in other directions, but in a mysterious way we were always led back to the towpath, from where we retreated into the past on a thin rope to probe it as if with an echo sounder.

The defense attorneys drove to the festival in their hometowns in jeeps provided by the court. I felt quite abandoned without them, missing the daily reports about our client. However, I received mail from Alfred twice a week through the court. The siblings of my husband's first wife, Konrad Graf Bullion and his wife Hedwig, who lived in Bavaria, had invited me to spend the holidays with them, but I declined. It seemed to me that I could not do without the quiet strength that penetrated the walls of the cell. Colonel Andrus had rejected my request to send Alfred a small Christmas tree. The court had only approved a small notebook for the new year, with little drawings for each day. Alfred wrote: "I am in better physical and mental shape than ever. I believe that the triad of my statements, those of the witnesses, and the documents strikes a good chord... Write how you feel. I don't want 'cheerful' letters. I know how much easier I have it than you, for many reasons, and that's why you should unload everything that weighs on you onto me, as long as I can be there for you... I am glad to see how hardship brings all decent people together and how, through their care and helpfulness, they guard and nurture the flame of humanity so that one day it will once again unite as a warming flame the people who are still divided by hatred and passion today . . . I can only assure you that I will spend the coming days with the joyful feeling of your caring presence. The trials of September are over and will never return, not even in the last days, which will be the hardest for you . . ."

When the bells of Nuremberg began to ring at dusk on Christmas Eve—there were only a few of them left

a few left—I couldn't stay in my room. I went outside and, as I had done many times before, made my way to the destroyed city center. I sometimes wondered what drew me there again and again. Presumably, it was the naked truth that spoke from the desolation and hopelessness of the ruins. Here, there were no excuses to make to oneself; here, there was no need to feign an attitude. And there was something else: there was no hatred hanging over the cemetery-like silence of the burnt-out walls. Here, the score was even.

An icy wind whipped long swathes of snow across the market square, and I pulled my scarf tighter. Dead and silent, the square lay amid the ruins of what had once been our country's "treasure chest." In the fall, there had been days when the red sandstone ruins were almost reminiscent of the beauty of the Dolomites, and where poppies and daisies concealed the shabby ugliness of rusty iron bars, but now the gaping facades towered above, as if trembling in the frost. Next to the Dürer monument, I saw a small fire flickering on a pile of rubble. I climbed up and found myself face to face with two small children warming a large tin can on a brick fireplace. I crouched down next to them. "Don't you have a stove at home where you can cook your food?" "Today is Christmas Eve," said the older of the children, a

brown-eyed girl with carefully braided pigtails. "Today we're having two things," she continued importantly. "First soup and later potato dumplings. And there's no room for both downstairs." "Where downstairs?" "Down there in the bunker." The child pointed to steps leading to a narrow tunnel entrance in the middle of the rubble heap. "That's where we live." "How many of you are there?" I asked her, unable to take my eyes off her little brother, who, with his chubby red cheeks and shining eyes, seemed to embody life itself in this world of rubble. "There are four of us, one is still in captivity. I have to go and fetch the others now; they're collecting wood. If you wait until I've taken the soup down, would you like to come with me?" Nimble and agile, despite the rags around her bare feet, the girl carried the tin down the stairs. The little chubby dwarf next to me spat into the fire. "It's hissing," he said triumphantly. The girl came back, trustingly took my hand, took the little one by the other hand, and led me to the Vestnerturm. There, two boys of about twelve and thirteen were busy breaking boards out of a barrack with a hammer
and an axe. When we arrived, they quickly hid their tools behind some stones. "She won't betray us," the girl reassured them solemnly. "She knows that Mother told you to do this so that we would be warm on Christmas Eve."

Christmas 1945. A Christmas when parents in need sent their children out to steal. It seemed to me that the blanket of snow covering our land was like a large shroud. I crossed the bridge over the old city moat to St. John's Cemetery. The moon was shining brightly by now, and I made my way past the sharp shadows of the bomb craters to the copper sarcophagi of the old masters of the Middle Ages - Veit Stoß, Albrecht Dürer, Adam Krafft.

Wasn't there something here, wasn't there something indestructible emanating from these ruins? This secret, invisible life flowed from the remains of the Frauenkirche and the Peilerhaus. If this past was indestructible, couldn't there also be a future for our people, beyond all zone borders?

Today, thanks to the help of our former enemies, our country has returned to secure living conditions, and there can be no doubt about this future. But back then, we were like a vacuum that attracted whirlwinds from all directions, a chessboard on which the occupying powers made their first cautious opening moves in the game for power. We knew little about what it was like "over there" in the Eastern Zone. Even news from other Western occupation zones seemed to come from abroad. Compared to what we had heard about the Russians in Berlin, we had to be grateful that we belonged to the American occupation zone.

The wind had blown the snow away on the banks of the Pegnitz. I first had to find the path that led along the bank behind the Palace of Justice. The building, usually so brightly lit, was dark, and there was a deathly silence. A guard was patrolling the high wall, his white helmet shining in the light of the spotlights. Standing on tiptoe, I could just make out the roof of the wing where the main defendants were being held. Did Alfred sense that I was here? Everything I knew from his descriptions was right before my eyes: the cell, 2x4 meters in size, with a vaulted ceiling, the stained, dirty walls, the table made of cardboard and wooden sticks, the old mattress on the bunk, and

Above: The Palace of Justice in Nuremberg.
Right: The defendant in his cell.
Next page: Main hearing before the International Military Tribunal. The defendants can be seen (from left to right):

1. Front row: Ribbentrop, Keitel, Rosenberg, Frank, Frick;
2. Row: Raeder, Schirach, Sauckel, Jodl, Papen.

Directly in front of the defendants' benches are Jodl's defense attorneys: Prof. Exner (1st) and Prof. Jahr reiss (both holding their hands in front of their mouths).

Left: Professor Franz Exner,
with Professor Hermann Jahrreiss, Colonel General Jodl's defense attorney.
Below: Alfred Jodl being cross-examined.

Otherwise, everything was just stone. The constantly watching eyes at the flap in the door, and never the merciful darkness of night, always illuminated. "Go on!" shouted the MP from above.
At home, I found my room warmly heated. B. had sent a small tree, and the Pöhlmanns invited me to their home. I was among friends. At midnight, I went to midnight mass at St. Anthony's Church. The church was overflowing, but there was no pushing and shoving, only a modest request to be allowed to attend this first mass after the war. A deep longing was written on the faces marked by hardship and hunger. As the bells rang out fully and solemnly into the clear, cold winter night, I knew that they would bring Alfred in his cell the same comfort they brought me. His letter, which Father Sixtus handed me on Christmas morning, showed this:
"For us, there is no greater celebration of love than Christmas. But the degree of this love does not depend on what one can give as a gift. Even though I have never been so poor in my life and cannot

give anyone visible joy, I still feel rich in my solitude. Do not be sad that all your efforts to send me something have come to nothing. If life were not about life itself, but about its outcome, then I would have to be the unhappiest person today. But I am not. Fighting for the idea of preserving the honor of our soldiers is what gives this Christmas its character, as does the nameless suffering that has befallen thousands of unfortunate and innocent people. So on this Holy Evening, let us not allow softness to overcome us, but let us join hands in the knowledge that there is no situation that cannot be ennobled by one's attitude, by achievement or endurance."

On New Year's Day, the professors returned, frozen as they climbed out of the jeep. "How is our client?" was the first question. In Exner's warmly heated room, we sat around the table, and I read them Alfred's description of the Christmas days:

"Now the holidays are over, which were days of joy. On the 24th, nothing came from you, but in the afternoon, the harmonium sounded in the cell with old Christmas carols. I worked. Then the doctor brought a package of cookies and powder for lemonade. It was warm and cozy, and as I listened to the Christmas music, I thought of all those who are not as fortunate as I am. Then
the bells rang, and it was time for me to sit down on the bed with all your letters. I fell asleep happy and content. On the 25th, your two letters arrived with breakfast, and it became clear to me how relative all joy is and how no more precious gift could have made me happier. On the 25th, there were many visitors, the three psychologists, the Catholic priest, and two long walks, where I tried to comfort those who had not yet heard from their wives. My little Christmas table stands on the bed against the wall, a cardboard box covered with a blue doily, old pictures, your calendar, the pine branch, and the leafy plant that shares the cell with me so obediently. ... For the New Year, we want to keep hope alive within us; we humans never know what it will bring. For you, the New Year will initially bring a rush of work. Reading the documents thoroughly has brought me many valuable insights these past few days."

When the defense attorneys returned from the first session, they brought stacks of documents, with a thick blue folder on top. "These are all your husband's writings," said Exner, "he would like a copy for each of us. I have already considered bringing in a second typist. Some teams have four secretaries." I asked him to refrain from doing so because I feared for my position at 1MT. He agreed. "Jahrreiss will bring in his wife in the spring because he has been assigned to prepare a plea for the entire defense. Maybe she can help us a little."

Today, as I write this, I regret that we did not have a typist to help us. That would have given me time to look around for witnesses and evidence. But under the circumstances at the time, it was probably the right decision.

I showed the professors an expert opinion by Alfred on the "causes of the German collapse." "After the First World War, the military leaders had to answer to the Reichstag for the causes of the collapse and defeat," Exner said thoughtfully. "Today, your husband will be asked to explain why they fought for so long."

On January 3, 1946, all the defense attorneys returned from the courtroom looking very serious and thoughtful. During the trial
against SS-Obergruppenführer Kaltenbrunner, a witness had appeared who had testified to terrible things about the activities of the "Einsatzgruppen" in the East. I read the transcripts carefully; in order to come to terms with the past, I had to get to the bottom of things.

Otto Ohlendorf, SS-Obergruppenführer and department head in the Reich Security Main Office, had been leader of Einsatzgruppe D in Ukraine in 1941/42. According to his testimony, a few days before the start of the Russian campaign, he had received instructions from Himmler himself to liquidate Jews and Bolshevik commissars in the Einsatzgruppe's area of operation. In the spring of 1941, SS-Obergruppenführer Heydrich and the Wehrmacht, represented by Quartermaster General Eduard Wagner, who later shot himself on July 20, 1944, as a member of the resistance, reached an agreement on the activities of these task forces and their demarcation from the operational troops.

However, the decisive order for this was signed by Keitel on March 3, 1941, and issued by the OKW as "Guidelines in Special Areas for Directive No. 21" (PS 447).28Did this order mention the "liquidation of Jews and commissars"? The text of the document and sworn statements showed that this was not the case.

I had to force myself to read the transcripts, so deep was my revulsion and horror:

"The place of execution was usually an anti-tank trench or a natural crypt. The executions were carried out militarily, with firing squads . . . Then Himmler issued an order that in future women and children were to be killed only by gas vans . . . The gas van did not reveal its intended use. It was a closed truck. They were designed so that after the engines were started, gas was fed into the vehicle and death was brought about in about 10 to 15 minutes..."

The next witness, SS-Hauptsturmführer Wisliceny, was questioned by the American prosecutor Colonel Brookhardt about the timeline of the planned extermination of the Jews: "Until 1940, the general guidelines within the department were to resolve the Jewish question in Germany and the territories occupied by Germany through planned emigration. From that point on, the second phase was the concentration of all Jews in Poland and other German-occupied territories in the East in the form of ghettos. This period lasted approximately until the beginning of 1942. The third period was the so-called Final Solution of the Jewish Question, that is, the systematic extermination and annihilation of the Jewish people. This period lasted until October 1944, when Himmler gave the order to stop these exterminations."

Who gave these orders, Hitler or Himmler? Wisliceny described a conversation with Eichmann in which he asked him for permission to visit a ghetto. After some hesitation, Eichmann explained that these Jews were no longer alive:

"I then asked him who had given such an order. He claimed it was an order from Himmler. I asked him to show me such an order, as I could not imagine that such an order actually existed . . . Eichmann told me that he could also show me this order in writing if it would ease my personal conscience. He took a slim file from his safe, leafed through it, and showed me a letter from Himmler to the head of the SD. This letter stated, in essence, that the Führer had ordered the final solution to the Jewish question. The head of the Security Police and the SD and the inspector of the concentration camps were charged with carrying out this so-called final solution. This letter was signed by Himmler himself."

Wisliceny then described what Eichmann understood by "Final Solution":

"He told me that this term concealed the systematic biological extermination of the Jews in the eastern territories ... He always spoke of at least 4 million, sometimes even mentioning the figure of 5 million. He expressed this in a particularly cynical manner. He said he would jump into the pit laughing, feeling that he had five million on his conscience."

"When you read that, you really shouldn't be surprised about this trial and the hatred against us," I wrote to Alfred.

A few days later, these gruesome reports were supplemented by even worse ones: Dr. Blaha, camp doctor in Dachau, described the pseudoscientific experiments on helpless prisoners

: vaccinations with salt water, typhus bacilli, gasoline injections, hypothermia, etc. Would it ever be possible to make the world understand that only those directly involved really knew about these crimes? The witness Höllriegel, a guard, described how it was forbidden on pain of death to talk to third parties about what was happening in the camps.

As a criminologist and environmental researcher, Professor Exner was interested in the psychological motives of the Auschwitz camp commander, Höß. He requested permission to speak with him and returned deep in thought: "It's really strange. This man is now responsible for the deaths of millions, and yet I didn't have the impression that I was sitting across from a cold-blooded criminal. He described his serious conflicts to me, but Himmler had made it clear to him in a nighttime conversation that the extermination of the Jews was crucial for Germany's continued existence. 'Us or them!*"

"People were caught up in total confusion about moral concepts," Exner continued, "what a terrible game was played with the idealism of the young SS men."
Two days after this trial, I developed a high fever. In my nightmares, I saw my mother's starved face and watched her struggle in vain to tie two threads together. Then the image changed, and it seemed to me as if all the dead and tortured were crawling out of the stacks of documents toward me, as if they were awakening to a ghostly witch's dance of skeletons around my bed: "You supported this regime, you will have to pay!"
That night, my mother died in the Eastern Zone.

3.

Soldiers on trial

"You can want something and fight for it, which is a wonderful fate. You can want it and not fight for it, which is not worth mentioning. You can not want it and therefore refuse to fight for it, which can be very difficult. But you are at peace with yourself. But if you don't want it and still fight for it because of very specific circumstances, you are bound to lose. Either way. You can't share anything and want to know nothing more, so that you remain a clean gentleman in this world. Whether you want to or not, you have to become guilty."
Gerd Gaiser, "Die sterbende Jagd" (The Dying Hunt)
On February 4, 1946, General Telford Taylor, the second American chief prosecutor, began presenting the charges against the "General Staff and OKW Group," which had been accused of "criminal" acts. He identified 130 officers as members of this group, including 49 troop commanders who had never belonged to the General Staff. The younger officers of the General Staff were not included in the indictment, as the recently enacted Control Council Law No. 10 automatically placed them under arrest anyway. Thus, it was essentially more a matter of the hierarchy of military leaders than a group.
There seemed to have been little change in the tendency, clearly evident in the press since the surrender, to attack officers more harshly than, for example, officials of the Reich government, the foreign service, the judiciary, or even the party. No mention was made of the fact that the officers of the Reichswehr had not been involved in Hitler's election because Colonel General von Seeckt had strictly forbidden any political activity by officers. During table talks in the mess hall, I often found myself in a difficult position: "Why didn't Jodl just put an end to it? He must have known more than the others!" How often was I reproached for this, annoyed by the lack of thoughtfulness and trying to explain: that the OKW was initially Hitler's staff and that Jodl had no authority at all at the beginning;(29) that it was precisely the immediate proximity to events that often made it difficult to see the bigger picture ; that no foreign statesman would have negotiated with a general staff officer who was more or less unknown abroad; that von Seeckt's officers had been trained to think apolitically; that, above all—unless one decided to commit murder—it was not so easy to "call it quits." The front commanders faced the enemy, responsible for the lives of their soldiers, in the East in the fight against communism. This was no less true for Jodl. And he faced a ruthless dictator every day, in the Saturn ring of his absolute power, in the magic circle of this demonic will, presumably only informed one-sidedly by the press office. For both Jodl and the front commanders, their thoughts and actions were dictated by the Allies' demand for "unconditional surrender." "I have never actually met anyone," I explained to Dr. Dix, "who has thought through this ending logically in all its phases. This included an opposing side that played along. Think of the Allies' reaction after July 20!" Dr. Dix nodded. As one of the defense attorneys for the July 20 defendants, he knew only too well how hopeless the rebels' attempts had been to establish contacts abroad in order to gain support for their plans.
In view of this hate propaganda directed against the soldiers, our defense attorneys very much welcomed the fact that the American soldiers' newspaper "Stars and Stripes" took up the issue. The paper quoted an article from the official organ of the American armed forces, "Army and Navy Journal," in which Chief Prosecutor Jackson was accused of discrediting the honorable status of soldiers. We waited with bated breath for Jackson's response: "I have made it clear that we are not

prosecuting these militarists because they served their country and went to war. Not because they waged wars, but because they drove their country to war."
This thesis of "warmongering," also taken up by General Telford Taylor, has been proven historically inaccurate. None of the defendants was convicted of initiating the war. Apart from Raeder's proposal to preempt a British landing in Norway, there is no document in which plans to expand the war originate from anyone other than Hitler himself. And here, too, only future historiography will bring full clarity.
Once again, it was a voice from the US that brought support to the defense, this time from the American Chief of Staff, General George Marshall himself: The Basler Zeitung quoted from a report to President Truman:
"No evidence has yet been produced to show that the German General Staff had any far-reaching strategic plan. The history of the German General Staff from 1938 onwards is one of constant conflict of opinion, in which military judgment was increasingly subject to Hitler's personal orders . .
And commented on this:
"As is well known, the Allied War Crimes Commission deemed it appropriate to indict not only Hitler's senior officials but also the military leaders. For the latter, the findings of the Marshall Report will undoubtedly provide significant relief. More importantly, this will also inform the American public for the first time – something that experts on the situation have always known – that the German General Staff and the conservative forces in Germany were by no means warmongers and war criminals, but on the contrary, even years before the war and during the war, sought to slow down or at least limit Hitler's war policy in every case."
General Taylor had repeatedly cited the so-called "key documents" in his indictment. These were a total of ten documents, some of them speeches by Hitler. They were considered so incriminating because they gave a revealing, albeit sometimes contradictory, picture of Hitler's goals. Our defense was very satisfied that only three of these ten documents were used by the prosecution against Jodl.
The first was the so-called "Hoßbach Protocol," a subsequent transcript by Hitler's then chief adjutant, Colonel Hoßbach, of a meeting in the Reich Chancellery on November 5, 1937. In addition to Hitler, the participants included Reich Minister of War von Blomberg, the commanders-in-chief of the three branches of the Wehrmacht, Göring, Fritsch, and Raeder, Reich Foreign Minister Frhr. v. Neurath, and Hoßbach. Without any official decision, Hitler revealed his future intentions for the first time:
"The only way to solve the German question is through force . . . If I am still alive, it is my unalterable decision to solve the German space question by 1943/45 at the latest . . . The invasion of Czechoslovakia must be carried out with lightning speed . . ."
Hoßbach's subsequently compiled minutes reveal that both Blomberg and Fritsch expressed reservations. "Presumably a key document for the Fritsch crisis," Exner aptly remarked. Today we know that these minutes were not handed over by Colonel General Frhr. v. Fritsch to his successor, Colonel General v. Brauchitsch, in 1938, nor by Colonel General Beck to General Halder. Was this due to strict secrecy, or was the document not considered to be of great importance?
The second document, also referred to by the prosecution as the "Little Schmundt" (after Hitler's former chief adjutant), is also a speech by Hitler, this time delivered on May 23, 1939, to the assembled commanders-in-chief. Jodl was not present at this speech either, as he was still serving as artillery commander in Brno at the time. This was the first time the term "Lebensraum im Osten" (living space in the East) appeared. "The decision remains to attack Poland at the first suitable opportunity. A repeat of the Czech situation is unthinkable. There will be a fight. The task is to isolate Poland . . ."
There were three different versions of the next document, a speech by Hitler at Obersalzberg on August 22, 1939—again, Jodl was not present—none of which were signed.
The following were also considered "key documents": the law on the establishment of a Reich Defense Council and the notes of the interpreter and envoy Dr. Paul Schmidt on Hitler's conversation with Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka.

The three remaining key documents were relevant to the Jodl case: the so-called "Große Schmundt," a bundle of 81 telegrams on plans for the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Directive No. 21 for the Russian campaign, which was initialed by Jodl but signed by Hitler on December 18, 1940, and the minutes of a speech by Hitler on November 23, 1939, at which Jodl was present: "From the very first moment, it was clear to me that I could not be satisfied with the Sudeten German territory
. . . Then came the establishment of the Protectorate, and with it the foundation for the conquest of Poland was laid, but at that point I was still not clear whether I should proceed first against the East and then against the West, or vice versa."

In his indictment, General Taylor addressed a problem of fundamental importance: the concept of "war of aggression" as opposed to "just war": "It is perfectly legal for professional soldiers to make plans for national emergencies; it is even perfectly legal for military leaders to carry out such plans and wage war, provided that they do not plan and wage wars that are illegal because they are wars of aggression and violate the statute."(30)

Alfred, as a soldier, commented: "We soldiers don't know anything about wars of aggression. That's a political term. Even wars of aggression can be waged strategically defensively, and vice versa. No soldier has ever been held responsible for anything other than military actions or omissions. Have you ever heard of Napoleon's chief of staff being held responsible for Napoleon's wars?"

"What about this 'war of aggression'?" I asked Professor Jahrreiss. "Has the term been clearly defined in international law?" "No. Jackson knows this too and has already described it as a weakness of the Statute. And you will remember that in my plea for a comprehensive defense at the beginning of the trial, I pointed out to the court that although war is outlawed by the Briand-Kellogg Pact, the criminality of such a war is not yet established international law, let alone the criminality of an individual."

As we discussed all these questions late in the evening, I confessed to the professors that my head was spinning a little from it all. We sat around the round table as usual; Exner rested, smoking his beloved pipe, in the corner of the red plush sofa, his hips supported by pillows (he was already suffering from a tumor at the time). Jahrreiss worked on a stack of documents, taking notes with his quickly scribbled but meticulously accurate shorthand symbols. The stove had gone out, and we were starting to feel cold: "One more question," I said. "Has any state ever admitted to waging a war of aggression?" The laugh lines at the corners of Exner's eyes deepened.

"No state today would be foolish enough to admit that. The statesmen and generals of antiquity would probably have proudly acknowledged it, but they had to win. Today, it is clearly a political concept that must be exempt from application under international law until it has been clearly defined and declared punishable." His face suddenly became very serious as he tapped out his pipe: "If this trial resulted in a law that contributed significantly to securing peace, then it would have historical significance."

I showed him my husband's note on "war of aggression." "That shows that the issue of criminal liability did not arise at all. Will the defendant's view of things play a role?" Now Exner smiled again. "But of course. You are now beginning to delve into the oldest principles of continental criminal law: 'actus non facit reum nisi mens rea.' A crime consists of two elements: the 'actus,' the objective side, the act, and the 'mens rea,' the subjective side, the guilt. I will, of course, go into this in more detail in my closing statement."

On January 9, 1946, Taylor submitted two affidavits in the special charges against Keitel and Jodl, which Jodl's defense objected to because they did not correspond to the facts. These were two identical statements by Field Marshal von Brauchitsch and Colonel General Halder about the war command structure. In the attached sketch, the OKW was depicted as an independent command center to which the three branches of the Wehrmacht were directly subordinate. This was incorrect. The OKW was only Hitler's staff, even if there were shifts in command authority during the course of the war.31 The tendency of these statements caused me considerable concern. They showed the clear desire of the former OKH to shift sole responsibility to the OKW.32 The first defense attorney for the "General

Staff Group" told me quite openly: "Keitel and Jodl are lost anyway, so we'll shift everything onto the OKW." This attitude prompted the former chief judge of the Wehrmacht, Judge General Dr. Lehmann —whom I knew from my escape—to write the following letter to the lawyer:
"It is astonishing to note that the position of the OKW in the eyes of the Wehrmacht units becomes greater and more influential the more time passes. Even before the war and during the war, the Wehrmacht units could not
do enough to emphasize that the OKW had no authority over the Wehrmacht units. The commanders-in-chief were subordinate only to the Führer. This was often expressed in a decidedly offensive manner ... In contrast to this are the tendencies that can now be observed everywhere: Efforts are being made to portray the OKW as the highest military authority, to which the Wehrmacht units obeyed silently and with soldierly self-denial. I would just like to emphasize that the emphasized direct responsibility of the commanders-in-chief to the Führer entailed not only rights but also duties. These duties did not apply only to Keitel and Jodl. As much as I understand the effort to clarify the character of the group, I will not stand by and watch this happen exclusively at the expense of Field Marshal Keitel and Colonel General Jodl."
I tried to explain to the defense attorneys: "Due to the army's direct subordination to Hitler from 1941 onwards, the army leadership was probably exposed to the greatest pressures. It is no coincidence that neither the navy nor the air force were involved in the assassination attempt – with very few exceptions." "You are certainly right," said Exner, "but you see, even men involved in the assassination attempt, such as Beck and Witzleben, have been put on the list of criminals. These men, together with a man like Himmler! That is a deliberate defamation of the soldier. And there is only one thing that can help: esprit du corps in the face of the accusers. Your husband showed me a list of officers he helped against Hitler, often without their knowledge. That seems to have been forgotten now."
In view of these events, I was deeply pleased when, on May 10, his birthday, Alfred was shown proof of camaraderie that transcended all tensions. He wrote:
"Today I received a congratulatory message with two packs of cigarettes, which reads: 'To our dear Jodl (the same words were once spoken by Beck on a General Staff trip in which I participated as a guest of the OKW) on this day, our warmest congratulations and wishes in unwavering faith in your star.'" It was signed by Field Marshals von Manstein, Brauchitsch, and Kesselring, Generals Westphal and Stumpff, and Jodl's former colleague Major i. G. Büchs.
Professor Exner had requested to be relieved of his duties as co-defender of the "General Staff Group," partly for practical reasons and partly for health reasons. Initially, Dr. Leverkühn and Dr. v. Schlabrendorff were named as his successors. I met Dr. v. Schlabrendorff at the mess; it was my first conscious encounter with a member of the resistance. He spoke to me about his friend Tresckow, and I listened with deep emotion as he recounted details of his self-chosen death. When Schlabrendorff drove me home to Denisstraße, I asked him whether he thought my husband might be sentenced to death. "A number of death sentences are certainly to be expected, but I would like to think that your husband is not among them." These words reassured me greatly, because I could assume that he was well informed. Or was he just trying to comfort me?
Instead of Leverkühn and Schlabrendorff, Dr. Hans Laternser was appointed as defense counsel for the "General Staff Group." A good and trusting working relationship developed between him and our defense team, and as the subsequent acquittal of the "General Staff Group" proves, the defense of the officers was in the best of hands with him and his co-counsel, Dr. Frohwein.
On January 9, the special indictment against Keitel and Jodl was read out by the British prosecutor Dr. Roberts. The summary of the charges against both officers in one document caused us headaches. "This could easily lead to a blurring of responsibilities," said Jahrreiss. "Your husband has stated that he would never incriminate Keitel, but as defense attorneys, we can only think of his interests."(33)
Mr. Roberts concluded the indictment against Jodl with the words:

"As far as Jodl's participation in war crimes and crimes against humanity is concerned, he is much less prominent than Keitel. Of course, he did not have the authority to issue orders and instructions. But we see that he did, in any case, sign and pass on the infamous Führer order, according to which commandos were to be shot and not treated as prisoners of war under any circumstances. I am of the opinion that the evidence against these two men is overwhelming and that their conviction is demanded by the civilized world."

In the closing arguments, in addition to the "war of aggression," the question of obedience played a major role: "Political allegiance and military obedience are good things, but there comes a point when one must refuse to follow one's leader."

During the course of this day of proceedings, the American court psychologist, Mr. Gilbert, informed me that an American professor had requested a meeting with me. The scholar, as far as I remember, Mr. Louis from Ohio, received me in Gilbert's room and, with the impartiality and ease characteristic of his people, asked me about the origin and development of the concept of obedience in the German army. Based on my entire upbringing—although I grew up in an extremely liberal home—authority seemed to me to be something useful. And from my years of professional experience in the War Ministry, military obedience had become such a fixed concept for me that I had occasionally thought about it, but had never seriously questioned it. A lack of moral courage seemed to me to be more a weakness of character than a consequence of the obedience that was demanded. So I was of value to my conversation partner at most because I was able to convey to him in broad strokes Alfred's view, who had expressed himself in detail on this very topic in a study. Because it is important for assessing his way of thinking, I will quote an excerpt:

"When Reich President von Hindenburg died, I, like all officers, took the oath to Adolf Hitler, whom the overwhelming majority of the German people had chosen as their leader: 'I swear by God this sacred oath that I will render unconditional obedience to the leader of the German people, Adolf Hitler, the supreme commander of the Wehrmacht, and that I will be prepared, as a brave soldier, to lay down my life at any time for this oath.' This oath determined my actions; I felt bound by it. For me, it represented—and no one in the political turmoil of the postwar period advocated this principle more than I, as a teacher of General Staff officers—the moral and ethical foundations of all military discipline and thus of the very existence of the state. A Wehrmacht that deviates even slightly from this principle is not worth a penny of the state's money, for it becomes a danger to the state it is supposed to protect. However, this obedience cannot apply only to ordinary soldiers or troops, but especially for generals, and all the more so the higher their position. For the history of war has taught me that it is not the troops, but the higher leaders who are prone to disobedience and have thus more than once caused the greatest military and political crises or defeats. 34

To my knowledge, the idea that a legal state authority exercising legislative and executive power could not act morally is not provided for in German legal principles. It would therefore have to be a law that governs above the laws of the state. And this brings us to the religious principle that one must obey God rather than man, or, applied to this trial, that one must obey the moral principles generally recognized in Christian humanity rather than a state and military authority that orders their violation, a principle that I recognize in very clear cases. For no command would have led me to commit torture, torment, or other acts of brutality.

Nevertheless, this legal opinion can only be defended with the utmost care, for it is, for example, a highly moral and ethical principle of serious Bible students not to fight against other people. However, its observance on a large scale could lead to the destruction or dissolution of a state. Our Western opponents would have been in serious trouble if the crews of the bomber fleets had declared that they refused to carry out terrorist attacks against German cities because they were linked to the mass destruction of peaceful civilian populations and therefore violated the principles of civilized warfare. As long as there is no higher authority on earth than that of individual states, i.e., no power capable of enforcing compliance with any supranational regulation, citizens and, even more so, soldiers are bound

by the laws, regulations, and orders of their states, especially in wartime, at least as long as these orders do not pursue a clearly recognized purpose that contradicts the legal concepts of this country."
Jodl concludes his remarks with the words: "It was clear to all officers that the fight was not about the regime, but about Germany. We were like a damaged ship that would either weather the storm or go down with all hands
. The Führer had strictly forbidden any request by an officer to be relieved of his post or to resign as a violation of the duty of obedience, otherwise I would have taken this step in 1942. So the only option left was to shoot oneself or openly refuse to obey, which was tantamount to suicide. Who would benefit from that? Certainly not Germany, and that was what mattered. Other officers would have taken my place, either mismanaged things after a short time or become even more compliant tools of this violent and energetic personality. They would not have been able to change anything. The Wehrmacht would have suffered a new shock of confidence in its leadership. My actions were not intended to provide me with an alibi before the court of our enemies; they were solely motivated by my duty and my responsibility to the German people. Due to my position, I recognized early on that the Führer had become the fate of Germany. Anyone who believed at any time after Adolf Hitler's seizure of power that they could change this fate was mistaken. They could only plunge Germany into a terrible fratricidal war. So I came to the decision to follow the difficult and self-sacrificing path alongside the Führer to the bitter end. I still had a certain amount of influence; I could afford to openly oppose him in many cases, and sometimes I even prevailed in matters of leadership. I was able to mediate and thus help dozens of officers. I was also able to prevent the worst excesses of reprisals here and there (treatment of low-level pilots, termination of the Geneva Convention, etc.). Often, however, any resistance was impossible from the outset. Every man who was at the Führer's headquarters will testify that I was free of any blind obedience and known for my opinions.
So, to sum up, I knew of practically no other way to prevent what the indictment describes as crimes, insofar as these crimes fell within my area of responsibility. If the Attorney General makes such a demand, then he should also tell me what course of action I should have taken. There was none."
During the conversation with the American professor, a point was touched upon that I knew too little about to grasp its
It concerned "the defense of superior order." According to Article 8 of the IMT Charter, acting on the orders of the government or a superior did not exclude punishment, but could be taken into account as a mitigating factor.
Only after the verdict, i.e., too late, did we learn of an event that could have been decisive for Jodl's defense. Professor Exner received an anonymous copy of a study by a British international law expert, Professor Smith in London, which dealt with the "defense of superior order." We were extremely excited to learn that, with regard to the Nuremberg trial, the relevant paragraph in the British Manual of Military Law had been amended in 1944—as, incidentally, it had been by the Americans. In his study, Professor Smith quoted the earlier version of the paragraph and wrote:
"The paragraph just quoted was sufficient to acquit most of the defendants in the Leipzig trial after World War I and would also constitute a complete defense for most of the charges in Nuremberg. When the war crimes trials were being prepared in London in April 1944, the War Office amended the wording of paragraph 443 in such a way that it no longer provided protection for superior orders."
Professor Smith sharply criticized this action: "It is of crucial importance that the text was amended after many of the acts charged had already been committed. It is completely incompatible with the traditions of our justice system to deprive this type of defense of an essential basis."(35)
The court later ruled on the question of obedience:
"The true criterion has no connection with the order received. It lies in deciding whether and to what extent the perpetrator of the act constituting the subject matter of the indictment had moral freedom and practical choice."36
4.

Prosecutor and defense counsel

"As a military tribunal, this court represents a continuation of the Allied war effort." Chief Prosecutor Jackson, International Military Tribunal,

July 26, 1946

The prosecutors still had the floor. On February 17, French Chief Prosecutor François de Menthon began reading his government's indictment with Gallic pathos and brilliantly polished rhetoric. One of his theses was that in an illegal war, any act of war was "criminal." While the Anglo-Saxon indictment was based almost exclusively on the partly manipulated factual material of German captured documents, the French material consisted mainly of affidavits from French citizens. In their uniformity of accusations against the "German barbarians," they had a somewhat numbing effect.

Again, the French indictment, "Requisitoire individuelle," summarized the points against Keitel and Jodl, bringing with it the same problem of a conflation of competencies. While the British placed their main emphasis on the "war of aggression," here the focus was on "war crimes." Of the 30 incriminating documents cited, seven were relevant. (37) Regarding Jodl, it was said: "His attitude, his orders, his actions revealed that he had developed into a general with political aspirations." "Where are they?" Alfred wrote in sober self-awareness in the margin of the indictment.

Then it was the Russians' turn to speak. The documentary material exceeded even that of the French in volume and, like the French material, lay unbound in the defense's files. The lack of authentication in most cases led to an initial controversy between the presiding judge, Lord Justice Lawrence, and the Russian chief prosecutor. This first crack in the wall of the Big Four seemed to us at the time to be of great significance.

The first witness for the Russians was Field Marshal Paulus, former commander-in-chief of the 6th Army in Stalingrad, who appeared in the witness box to great excitement. In an affidavit, Paulus had described Keitel and Jodl as "war criminals"; he said they were responsible for turning Stalingrad into a zone of extermination for the Russian civilian population, and that as a survivor he felt obliged to "give satisfaction to the Soviet people."

Not a word about his own responsibility towards the German people and the soldiers under his command! Paulus's claim that Jodl was responsible for Hitler's rejection of his request for surrender could hardly have been true. For one thing, he could not have known the exact circumstances, and for another, he must have known that at that point Jodl had been relieved of responsibility for the Eastern Front. "We had the impression that Paulus was under very strong pressure," Dr. Kranzbühler told me that evening. "Paulus is said to have been brought here only yesterday evening and taken away again under heavy guard immediately after the interrogation."

"I feel great sympathy for this witness," wrote Alfred.

The prosecution concluded its presentation with a well-calculated final act—the Archimandrite of Kiev appeared in full regalia on the witness stand. Over 2,000 incriminating documents had been submitted to the court, and 29 witnesses had testified. The prosecutors held all the trump cards. Having captured almost all German documents and archives, they were also in possession of material that could have served to exonerate the defendants. The world press and the German press were behind them, and the crimes of the regime that had been uncovered called for atonement. Grand Admiral Dönitz, as the last head of state, had already complied with this clear demand in May 1945 when, after the crimes in the concentration camps had become known, he had instructed the court-martial to immediately investigate and judge the guilty parties.

How was it that, despite all this, the prosecutors were unable to convince an objective observer that this trial was anything other than a political measure, a "continuation of the war effort," as Jackson later put it? Already on

November 24, 1945, Jackson had made similar remarks at the beginning of the trial. Fleet judge Kranzbühler told us about it:

"That was in a meeting attended only by the judges and the chief prosecutors, except for my colleague Dix and myself. At first, it was only a matter of the defense obtaining copies of the documents. Jackson was vehemently opposed to this, arguing that it would cause such a delay that the actual purpose of the trial, as pursued by the United States, would be jeopardized. 'What is that purpose?' asked Lord Justice Lawrence. 'The world must be convinced,' Jackson replied, 'that the Hitler regime was as criminal as the US has always portrayed it. Only then can the German people be made to understand the policy of punishment.' I was very impressed by this openly stated, purely political objective." "And what did the judges say?" I asked. "Well, they obviously weren't entirely convinced, because we then received copies of all the documents. But let's wait for the verdict."

When we discussed the problems that evening, Exner said, "I am convinced that some of these men approach their task with genuine idealism and even believe that they are doing a great service to the cause of justice."

The prosecution had charged 21 men, whose traditions were mostly as different as their goals, with a "common plan," a "joint conspiracy" to commit crimes. It went so far as to claim that this conspiracy dated back to 1921, a time when most of the defendants did not even know each other. Legal guilt was mixed with moral guilt and political error. The prosecutors deliberately ignored the fact that in a dictatorship, the final decisions between legitimate and moral duties are those before God. The prosecutors denounced them, even though they must have known about their own crimes and violations of international law – the murder of Polish officers at Katyn, the planned landing in Norway, the partition of Poland in the secret German-Soviet agreement of 1939. And the fact that the highly questionable figure of Gaston Oulman (who was later exposed as a criminal and committed suicide) kept the German people informed about the trial on a daily basis did not help to recognize it as "the fulfillment of man's desire for justice" (Jackson).

And now – the defense. March 8, 1946, was the day when it was finally, yet far too early, to take the floor. In this trial before the International Military Tribunal, which in reality was nothing more than an inter-Allied occupation court, the defense found itself in a situation in which it was inferior from the outset. At that time, the German lawyers who took on the responsible task of finding the truth had no one behind them, neither a central German authority nor a free German opinion. "In a sense, we are representing a German Foreign Office here," Dr. Dix once stated. "If we fulfill our task as history demands of us, we can make an important contribution to peace and reconciliation."

What the defense naturally lacked at first was a thorough knowledge and overview of the essential connections of the past, a prerequisite for a targeted concept. If knowledge of the past was already insufficient, it was completely lacking with regard to the present. The defense was aware of the Moscow and Yalta agreements on the punishment of war criminals, and it knew the Charter of the IMT. But it was unaware of the preliminary discussions that led to the creation of this Charter and knew nothing of the influence of the Russian professor Trainin. Exposed daily to the depressing impressions of the incriminating documents, it also had to fight against the tide of propaganda that flooded the defendants with a wave of hatred, equating them with barbarism and sadism.

In addition, there were often personal psychological stresses. It had undoubtedly been a generous decision to initially allow former party members to act as lawyers. But the constantly repeated checks by the CIC created an undignified atmosphere and even led to the temporary, erroneous arrest of a Munich lawyer. In addition, there were numerous vicious attacks by the German press, which only ceased when Lord Justice Lawrence publicly backed the German defense attorneys as officials of the court and promised them his protection.

At least as significant as these handicaps, at least in the first few months, were purely procedural obstacles. First, there was the contrast between continental European and Anglo-Saxon legal thinking! According to German

German law, but also under French law, the public prosecutor assists the court in establishing the truth and does not take sides. In the trial conducted according to Anglo-Saxon law, the defense attorneys first

had to adjust to the fact that the prosecutor was opposing them as a party. Only gradually did the defense grow into this procedure and become aware of the significance of the "cross-examination," which was previously unfamiliar to them, with its often cunning methods of discrediting a witness. "We have an excellent, albeit often painful, teacher in the English chief prosecutor," Kranzbühler told me. "We will probably only have mastered the other, precisely graded methods of Anglo-Saxon procedure, such as stipulations, objections, rebuttals, etc., for influencing the presentation of evidence, when the trial is over."

Step by step, constrained by the rules of procedure, the defense had to fight its way through. The prosecution responded to the defense's proposal for the presentation of evidence, submitted to the court on February 4, with a counterproposal: the defense should agree in advance to individual points, such as the charges of "conspiracy" and "unjust war." Furthermore, it was demanded that a list of the witnesses requested, the questions to be put to them, and the documentary evidence be submitted at a very early stage. So while the prosecution was able to present its evidence without any control and by surprise, the defense's evidence was now to be subject to close scrutiny and its admissibility decided by the court on the basis of an expert opinion from the prosecution. On February 16, a delegation consisting of Prof. Exner, Fleet Judge Kranzbühler, Dr. Siemers, and Dr. Stahmer protested against this treatment of the defense, but to no avail. The court approved a plea by the entire defense on general legal issues, but rejected every other motion.

This meant that the motions to summon witnesses now had to specify, point by point, what the witness would be questioned about. If the court rejected a witness, it was possible to send him a questionnaire, but this was not a complete substitute. At that time, almost the entire hierarchy of German civil servants and officers was in internment camps. It was clear
that none of the internees wanted to draw attention to themselves or even be called as witnesses to Nuremberg. It was a well-known fact that the denazification authorities that had been set up in the meantime were working closely with the prosecutors and that the latter were keen to label as many people as possible as "criminals." Appearing as a witness in Nuremberg could therefore easily mean ending up in a wing with the "war criminals."

Obtaining the documents requested by the defense was no less delicate. When, for example, Dr. Stahmer requested the submission of official German documents on Polish and Russian atrocities for his case, the British chief prosecutor stated:

"So these documents are supposed to prove that if the Reich committed violations of the rules of war, the others did the same. The opinion of the prosecution is that this is completely irrelevant."

Professor Exner protested in vain against this prohibition on referring to crimes committed by the enemy: "One must take into account the motive for an act and its possible retaliatory nature."

The number of defense attorneys had meanwhile more than doubled with the addition of co-counsel; almost every team had two or three secretaries. They were paid by the court. During the daily communal meals, I had the opportunity to get to know most of the lawyers and soon gained the impression that they were, for the most part, outstanding representatives of their profession. I had learned to understand the language of the lawyers, which was initially foreign to me, so that I could follow the debates. In this way, I also learned a lot about the cases of the other defendants, which I would not otherwise have had time to do. I noticed how some of the defense attorneys, who had spoken disparagingly about their clients at the beginning of the trial, changed their opinions over time in a kind of symbiosis, so that they spoke of them with understanding, if not sympathy. In isolated cases, however, the opposite could be observed, as in the case of Dr. Kauffmann, Kaltenbrunner's defense attorney.

When I sat among these lively groups during meals, I sometimes wished I were here not as a participant in this trial, but as an uninvolved observer
. I would have been more emotionally free, less tired, more alert in my observations. And yet the impressions are still very much present in my mind. Our team was on particularly good terms with

Schacht's defense attorneys: Professor Herbert Kraus, his wife Tilly, and Dr. Dix. When I saw them all sitting together with our defense attorneys at the corner table reserved for us in the morning, it was always a good start to the day, and I could be sure of an informative and lively conversation. Dr. Dix stood out simply by his appearance, a man of the world in the best sense of the word, tall, with exceptionally intelligent eyes beneath a high forehead and a crown of white hair. Behind this extremely winning exterior lay modesty, kindness, and sensitivity. He was so well-read in the classics that he probably knew a suitable quotation for every situation. I loved listening to his colorful descriptions, whether from his time as a civil servant in Cameroon or from his work as a legal advisor to members of the resistance movement. Dr. Dix belonged to the "conciliatory wing" of the defense attorneys, but he did not hesitate to resort to sharp sabers in verbal battles when his sense of justice was violated.
The two defense attorneys for Grand Admiral Dönitz, Fleet Judge Kranzbühler and Lieutenant Commander Meckel, often joined our table. They wore the uniforms of their still-active mine clearance unit with a refreshing matter-of-factness. Kranzbühler combined the fighting spirit of the "hardline faction" with conciliation in a flexible manner. With his masterful command of the subject matter, he was able to win many important points in favor of the overall defense in a tough battle before the court, and he was held in equally high esteem by his colleagues and the court. One had to know him better to understand the idealism, heart, and human understanding with which this man, with his very controlled features and movements, pursued his goals without any regard for his own person. We also maintained lively contact with the defense attorneys for Grand Admiral Raeder, Dr. Siemers and Baron von der Lippe. This team liked to emphasize its civilian character; even in the most beautiful weather, the respected Hamburg lawyer carried his umbrella with him. With his winning charm in conversation, especially with women, Dr. Siemers became fanatical when the conversation turned to Hitler. He saw him as a pure
criminal who had only used the German people for his own power instincts.
The changing circle of the round table also included Dr. Nelte, Keitel's defense attorney. He carried out the very extensive work for his case with the help of his wife and daughter and was tireless in his efforts throughout. His very human attitude toward his client's fate won my sympathy. It was easier to get in touch with him than with Dr. Laternser, the defense attorney for the General Staff, whose sensitive face was marked by restless work. His fearless advocacy for the officers often made his position difficult; he lacked the elegance of Kranzbühler's foil fencing. When opinions clashed at the table during heated debates, Dr. Steinbauer from Vienna, Seyß-Inquart's defense attorney, always knew how to intervene with humor and a gracious gesture. He spoke of his client with sympathy and respect: "He has a completely different attitude to this trial than Jodl," Dr. Steinbauer once explained to me, "Seyß-Inquart is a philosopher, he will face even the worst with a wise smile. Your husband is conducting his defense with a sword in his hand until the very last minute." He was to be proven wrong.
At the end of the table, Munich lawyer Dr. Sauter, defense attorney for Minister of Economics Funk, stood out among his colleagues with his large-checkered jacket and colorful tie. After a busy day, listening to Sauter, an enthusiastic angler, recount his fishing experiences was like sitting peacefully in a boat on Lake Starnberg. He played just as important a role in the overall defense as his colleague Dr. Nath and his wife, also a brilliant lawyer. With his sharp profile clouded by pipe smoke, Dr. Haensel, equally well known as a lawyer, author, and mountaineer, sat at the next table. He had joined the defense of the SS out of psychological interest, which, according to his colleagues' verdict, was handled by Dr. Pelckmann in a legally impressive manner. Opposite him, his sharp nose protruding in heated debate, sat Dr. Seidl, sometimes jokingly referred to as "V 2." His dynamism and tenacious persistence, with which he had managed to push through the admission of the German-Russian secret agreement as evidence, earned him not only the admiration and recognition of his colleagues, but also
The court paid particular attention to this Munich lawyer. The same was true of Dr. Horn, defense counsel for former Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop. He had the delicate task of defending the foreign

policy of the Third Reich and, together with Kranzbühler, drafting a statement on the issue of the war of aggression.
And finally, those closest to us, our defense attorneys. Professor Hermann Jahrreiss, a native of Saxony, had initially worked as a district court judge before deciding to pursue an academic career. Already an associate professor in Leipzig at the age of 28, he later accepted appointments in Cologne and Greifswald. For him, teaching young people was as much a mission as his work as a researcher. It was no coincidence that the defense team had commissioned him to draft the plea on questions of international law. His sober approach was complemented in the most vivid way by his diverse artistic interests and a high level of talent in the field of painting. "Born to see, destined to look." This Olympian gaze was already evident in his strongly arched high forehead and sharp, observant eyes beneath a helmet of gray hair. His humane, freedom-granting understanding won him the whole heart of his client.
And finally, equally a friend, Professor Franz Exner – now long resting at the foot of his beloved mountains. As the scion of a famous Viennese family of scholars, which counted Gottfried Keller among its friends, he had chosen a legal career like his father. At the request of the Carnegie Foundation, he studied criminal biology and sociology in depth and made a name for himself in this field of international renown. In a rare stroke of luck, Exner combined the thoroughness and careful deliberation of a researcher and philosopher with a joyful appreciation of everyday life, which he always considered the most vivid source of his environmental research. It was always a pleasure for me to observe the affection and respect with which the other defense attorneys treated him. His kindness, his unfailing humor, and his wisdom, heightened by his foreknowledge of his approaching death, helped me to overcome many dark hours.
I believe I can say that the human bonds between Jodl and his defense attorneys—with the exception of Dönitz—
were unique in the history of the trial. They became friends. The more I became aware of this, the more I was depressed by Professor Exner's noticeably deteriorating health. He never or only rarely spoke of his ailments, but the attentive observer could not fail to notice the fatigue and pain in his features when he returned from the sessions. Could we justify exposing this loyal friend to such stress, perhaps robbing him of his last reserves and thus shortening his life? On the other hand, wouldn't a change cause a crisis for my husband? I very cautiously hinted at my concerns to Alfred. His answer was clear and precise as always: "We would deeply offend Professor Exner if we asked him to resign; he could interpret it as a lack of trust. But my trust is unlimited. Since Jahrreiss is intervening so energetically, we can only hope that Exner will persevere without suffering any harm. I believe he sees this defense as his last great task."
I realized how right my husband was in this assessment when I visited Professor Exner shortly thereafter at the Erlangen University Hospital, where he was undergoing radiation treatment. He refused to say a word about his health and wanted only to know the latest news about the trial: about the court, the prosecution, and the defense attorneys. Above all, however, he wanted to hear—again and again—about his client.

5.
Preparations for the hearing of evidence

"For us, the only thing that matters is trying. The rest is not our concern."
T. S. Eliot

On March 6, the motions for witnesses and documents submitted by Professor Exner a week earlier were heard before the court. The majority of the requested documents—21 in total—were admitted, but some were rejected. These included the book by Ponomarenko, chairman of the People's Commissariat in the USSR, on the partisan struggle in the East. "500,000 German troops killed by partisans" was the title under which Stars and Stripes had commented extensively on the book. Two other rejected documents were the "Handbook for Modern Warfare"38 and a British order captured at Dieppe in 1942

to tie up German prisoners of war. Both documents were important for the creation of the "Kommandobefehl," the order to shoot so-called "commando troops."
When the British chief prosecutor rejected these documents, Professor Exner protested:
"As far as irrelevance is concerned, we are not claiming that the orders contain anything illegal. But if, for example, the close combat order instructs English soldiers to carry out actions for which our soldiers are being accused, then there would be a contradiction that would indeed be significant. For then the English government would apparently take the position that this type of combat action is permissible. But if it is permissible there, then it must also be permissible here, for there must not be double standards."
"The court will consider your arguments," was the chairman's Solomonic response. Professor Exner's protest was to no avail. Jodl was denied the British close combat regulations as evidence; it was not until Trial No. XII that General Warlimont was able to present them in his defense.
In the meantime, I had begun writing the document books. These books contained all the material collected in support of our case, in the order of the planned interrogations. For each document—125 in total—a cover sheet was required with information about its origin and date, as well as a certificate of authenticity from the defense attorney. Although most of the documents were only short excerpts, the three books ultimately comprised 200 pages. The copying and translation of the written matrices by the General Secretariat naturally meant that the prosecution became aware of their contents. During a random check, we discovered that important passages were sometimes missing from both the English and French texts, so that each sentence had to be compared with the German version. Exner drew attention to these errors in a submission – 38 in the English text and 32 in the French.
The defense decided to rearrange the examination of Jodl—contrary to the indictment—i.e., to place the "war of aggression," i.e., the activities of the General Staff, at the end, and the examination of "war crimes" at the beginning.
Of the 19 witnesses requested for Jodl, the court approved four: Retired General August Winter, most recently deputy chief of the Wehrmacht High Command; Prof. Dr. Percy Schramm, major in the reserves from 1943 to 1945 and keeper of the war diary in the Wehrmacht High Command; Major General Horst Frhr. v. Buttlar and Major i. G. Büchs, both general staff officers under Jodl. For the remaining witnesses, "interrogations"§§§§ were approved.
It was remarkable that one witness, Colonel Soltmann, former head of the Foreign Armies West department, volunteered in a telegram to testify about the Norwegian campaign. His courage cost him his freedom, as he had initially managed to evade internment. However, the Americans were so impressed by his principled stance
that he was one of the first officers to be released. We were even more impressed by the fact that the former commander of Construction Battalion 537, Colonel Ahrens, had crossed the zone border under cover of night and fog to testify about the murder of Polish officers at Katyn. Late into the night, he dictated his report to me: during a nighttime stalk, a sniffing wolf had drawn his attention to the hills of the mass graves.
After reports of Exner's requests appeared in the press, further offers of voluntary testimony were received. A district administrator offered to testify about the terror pilots, a pastor about the gang war; more important to us was a letter from a Jewish woman from Vienna, Erau Moskowitsch. She wrote to her friend Professor Exner:
"Vienna, November 9, 1945, 2 a.m.
I have learned that you have been appointed to defend General Jodl. If you believe that my testimony could be of use to him, I would like to share the following with you: In March 1939, news spread that all Jews would be sent to Poland. In my fear of death, I wrote to General Jodl's wife about the danger we were in. He and his wife visited us repeatedly. To me, he was the epitome of a highly educated and ethical officer. At first, we received an official letter from Jodl saying that he could do nothing for us. But after a few weeks, the president of the Administrative Court, Barsch, read us a letter from Jodl

saying that he had unfortunately had to reject our request in his official letter, but that he hoped we would not now be sent to Poland. At that moment, we felt like someone who had been pardoned after a death sentence. My husband and I have felt deeply indebted to the couple ever since. It is out of this feeling that I have decided to write to you, and I hope you will understand that I consider it my duty to try to make a small contribution to relieving the burden on this deeply unhappy man."
We discussed whether this letter should be used as evidence. Exner was against it: "Given the overwhelming number of Jewish victims, one individual case will not carry much weight. Above all, your husband is not charged with the murder of Jews."
On March 10, 1946, I received a letter from Alfred that showed me
how deeply he was grappling with the past and, above all, with the person of Hitler:
"In my thoughts about past events, the compass of my feelings is still spinning. When I read how Frank Thieß, after 1,500 years, attempted to arrive at a true picture of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian by turning away from 'history,' I am forced to think more intensely about the present and remember how the story of that man who threw the whole world into turmoil was falsified even as it was unfolding, and in part even by him. And so I find myself repeatedly wondering whether it might not be my mission, without any regard for my personal defense, to serve only to clarify the historical truth. I would do so if it weren't for two considerations that speak against it. First, that is not the main task of the court, which can end any such attempt with the legal term "irrelevant"; but ultimately it must also remain unsuccessful, since the archives of the other side are closed. And second, I ask myself: Do I even know this man, at whose side I have led such a thorny and renouncing existence for many years? Did he not also play with my idealism and use it only for purposes he concealed within himself? Who can boast of knowing another person if they have not opened up the most hidden folds of their heart in joy and sorrow? So today I do not even know what he thought, wanted, and knew, but only what I thought and suspected about it. And when today the veil falls from an image in which one once hoped to see a work of art, and one then finds oneself faced with a diabolical degeneration, future historians may rack their brains over whether it was like that from the beginning or whether this image changed in parallel with events. Sometimes I fall back into the mistake of blaming origin, only to remember how many farmers' sons history has given the name 'the Great'. The ethical foundation is what matters, not the will and not the spirit. It is true: 'The eternal is silent, transience is loud, God's will passes silently over the earth...'
Through secret channels, I had meanwhile learned all sorts of things about the prison itself. It consisted of four
wings, each with 100 cells. The first wing housed the so-called "main war criminals," my husband in cell 6. The prisoners in the second wing were particularly important witnesses or those who were to be charged later. They also lived in solitary confinement. The prisoners in the third and fourth wings were allowed to visit each other. Some only found out months later why they had been brought to Nuremberg. If a man had the same name as a well-known Nazi, he could find himself interned for months with several of his namesakes. For example, three Hildebrands were gathered in Nuremberg before the man they were looking for, Gauleiter Hildebrandt, was found.
Whether in the "witness wing" or the wing for "major war criminals," all prisoners had to undergo the same procedure upon arrival: surrender of suspenders, shoelaces, shaving kit, etc. The treatment of the officers stood in stark contrast to the provisions of the Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war. For the stocky, bull-necked commander of the prison, Colonel Andrus, these Germans – whether officers, industrialists, ministers, or scientists – were all "gangsters." Alfred's clear verdict: "Whatever the commander—one of the few people I hate—can think of to make things more difficult, he will do. He is a morally inferior individual, full of hatred, hypocritical, only interested in alcohol and women."
The greatest strain was probably caused by the nighttime disturbances, especially the glaring light of the searchlights, which constantly shone on the prisoners. Alfred's diary gives a vivid picture of this:

"7. 2. Nighttime interlude with a guard who wants to turn me over in bed and whom I yell at, saying I'll knock him down if he touches me again.

20. 2. Again, the guard's wake-up routine. Shortly before the change of guard, he comes into the cell after I don't show that I've been woken up by the noise and light shining on my head.

21. 2. Woken up by the guard addressing me.

23. 2. Second guard wakes me up by making noise. When I turn my face to the wall, he comes into the cell.

25. 2. Guard wakes me up because I am lying on my stomach. He disappears without shouting after my warning.

15. 3. Noise at night with sadistic guard. At the request of the NO***** , I allow myself to be persuaded to go back to bed.

16. 4. Harassment by the guard all night long. A particularly rough guy from 8:20 to 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 to 3:40 a.m.

23. 4. Guard wakes me up four times by calling and then says, "sleep well."

"How is he supposed to endure the cross-examination?" I asked Exner. "Alfred writes to me that the physical strain on the defendants who have already been questioned has been enormous." "Well, the witnesses get an extra allowance," Jahrreiss consoled me.

The fact that the prisoners retained their sense of humor despite this treatment, which was generally perceived as systematic demoralization, is demonstrated by a fictional cross-examination, a parody that came to me one day: Question: "Did you have any pets?" Answer: "Yes."

Question: "How many pets did you have?"

Answer: "Fourteen."

Question: "So you also had milk?"

Answer: "I didn't have any milk."

Question: "You just said you had pets. Do you want to change your original statement? Did you have pets or not?"

Answer: "Of course, I already said that."

Question: "So how much milk did you have?"

Answer: "May I explain . . ."

Question: "Witness, I don't want any explanations from you. You should answer my questions first. Can you get milk from pets?"

Answer: "Of course, but . . ."

Question: "So, witness, now we're getting closer to the point. So you had milk. Maybe not much, but you had milk."

Answer: "No, I didn't have much milk either, I . . ." Question: "So you had a little milk. What difference do you make between someone who has a little milk and someone who doesn't have much milk?"

Answer: "I don't make any distinction."

Question: "How much does someone who has a little milk have?" Answer: "It would depend on whether . . ."

Question: "Is a liter a little?"

Answer: "A liter isn't much."

Question: "How much is a few liters?"

Answer: "Certainly more than one."

Question: "You see, Mr. Witness, now we're getting closer to the point. I'll now return to the original question. How many liters of milk did you have?"

Answer: "I already said I didn't have any milk."

Question: "Are you trying to convince the court that you didn't have any milk even though you had pets?"

Answer: "That question is easy to answer. I didn't have any milk because I had a dog, a cat, and twelve chickens."
Question: "Why didn't you give this explanation right away?"
Answer: "You didn't want an explanation, you only wanted the answer 'yes' or 'no'."
Questioner: "I have no further questions for this witness."
March 12 became a significant day for my husband and me. Alfred had let me know that from now on, the defendants would eat in the attic—individually and without permission to speak—instead of in the basement as before. The windows of this attic faced the one-way street behind the courthouse, with a visibility of about 150 meters. When I stood at the agreed time on the sidewalk between two houses, one window was open, but no one was to be seen. I counted the windows on the wall of the house before looking again—empty. Fifteen minutes passed. Suddenly, clearly and distinctly, a uniformed figure stood in the window—Alfred! He put his hand to his mouth—was he smoking? I repeated the gesture. I pulled out my handkerchief and waved. But suddenly there was a second figure standing next to him, and I recognized the white helmet of an MP. I sniffed my nose and saw that Alfred did the same, and immediately afterwards the window was empty. From that day on, we saw each other every day, and I often took Putzi, the little terrier, with me to keep up appearances by playing with him in front of the guard post. "The unobstructed view over Nuremberg and into the distance is my favorite and most beautiful part of the day," Alfred wrote to me in his censored letters. When the apple trees in the
in the garden between the building and the street were in leaf, I spent a few days worrying that our view would be taken away. To this day, I don't know whose helping hand cut back the branches. Later, Colonel Andrus had bars put on the windows to restrict the view.
Meanwhile, Field Marshal Kesselring testified as a witness for Göring. Every defense attorney who hoped for a useful answer was allowed to question him. Professor Jahrreiss took the opportunity to obtain information about the handling of the command order in Italy and about Jodl's attitude toward Hitler. Kesselring described Jodl as "the representative of the front commanders"; he had contradicted Hitler to an extent "that bordered on the limits of what was militarily possible."
Hermann Göring's calm and confident demeanor on the witness stand won him the respect not only of many Germans, but also of the Americans. "Very clever," the Associated Press telegraphed to New York, and after a heated clash between Jackson and Göring: "He made a monkey of him." Even Alfred, who had been very critical of Göring during the war, was impressed; at the same time, he became more aware than ever of his own mission:
"I had no right and no reason to shirk this great task, because one thing is certain: I am bringing some bright and light colors to this gloomy picture, and that is valuable for the entire Wehrmacht and for our people. However, I could already tell you today what the press will write. But they cannot obscure the transcripts of my testimony and my closing words; they remain historical documents."
We were all so buried in our work that the arrival of spring took us by surprise, almost like an unexpected event. Alfred wrote:
"It reminds me of the time in Dahlem, like a spring before a winter night, when we don't know if and when it will end. But in it I see life, like in your little plant that is with me. It no longer has any of the leaves it had when I got it, and yet it is full of leaves and the same little stick. The roots have remained the same, just as the roots of my being have remained the same in misfortune and happiness. So everything that happens or will not happen around me can only affect my body, not
my soul . . . Our walk, apart from Saturday and Sunday, is of course in the evening around sunset. It is quiet and peaceful, and once I have quickly walked around 15 times, I slowly walk to the center, look up at the sky and dream, and it has often been the case that everything around me disappears, all the walls and posts, and I am completely alone and somewhere else entirely."
The case of former Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop presented the defense with a serious handicap: the court rejected any material on the Treaty of Versailles as justification for subsequent developments.

On April 3, the hearing of evidence in the Keitel case began. For us, his statements about the division of responsibilities in the High Command of the Wehrmacht were important: while Keitel was essentially responsible for ministerial, i.e., administrative tasks, Jodl was more or less responsible for operational warfare.
"How do you assess Keitel's testimony?" Exner asked Dr. Dix after the first cross-examination. Dix shook his head and looked concerned. "His courage to tell the truth is commendable, but he was too soft." Keitel had declared to the Russian prosecutor, General Rudenko: "I was an obedient and loyal soldier of my Führer . . . I do not believe that there are any generals in Russia who do not obey Marshal Stalin unconditionally." When I read that, I asked the table: "Will the Russian generals ever be required to stage a moral uprising against Stalin? There's a double standard here." "The victor always sets the standard," said Dr. Sauter from the next table.
Easter came, and I drove to Berchtesgaden for two days to pick up my summer clothes. When I returned to Nuremberg, I was able to pick up a letter right away:
"When you report on your trip to Berchtesgaden, remember that I am interested in everything and that I am completely cut off from life. Those who travel know what people talk about or whether they talk at all . . . Your impressions of the trial . . . all of that is worth knowing to me, quite apart from your own impressions . . . I take a keen interest in everything that goes on outside my cell, and when I hear that something good has happened to a loved one, I share in their happiness as if it had happened to me. How grateful I must be
be for the riches that life has bestowed upon me. I have never been lonely and abandoned; a loving hand has always taken mine. How grateful and happy I must be for this, and indeed I am. I believe that among all those who share my fate here, there is hardly anyone who is as balanced inwardly as I am. Now I look forward to your report, and even if not everything can be pleasant, it will still be impressions of freedom and life. Like a fresh breeze from Lake Chiemsee that will dispel the musty air of this terribly gloomy courtroom . . ."
At Easter, he wrote me a quote from St. Augustine:
"In what is necessary, unity; in what is doubtful, freedom; in all things, love," and added:
"So I know on this feast of the Resurrection that my life, too, does not have to become a Good Friday, but can still become an Easter Sunday, and that if we are still given a life together, St. Augustine's sentence will also apply to it ... We spent a lot of time outdoors in the beautiful weather, and sitting for so long has made us so one-sided that after three quarters of an hour of walking, our back muscles ache. At headquarters, it was the opposite, with hours of standing. I worked diligently for the first two days, and spent the last few days resting, reading, playing chess, and enjoying your letters... Nothing is dead in me, everything is alive, filled with confidence, faith, and love...
On April 24, Dr. Dix approached me at breakfast and said, "I'm afraid one of my witnesses will cause you grief today." Curious, I asked for the name. "Hans Bernd Gisevius." I heard the name for the first time and wanted to know more. "Gisevius originally worked under Diels in the political department," Dr. Dix explained to me. "Later, he joined the resistance movement as a leading member and played a key role for them as vice consul in Zurich."
Rarely had there been such heated discussions at the defense team's dinner table as there were then. Some of the witness's statements were viewed with skepticism, because Dr. Seidl had been able to prove that he had collaborated with the OSS (Office of Strategic Services)††††† during the war. What is now common knowledge to anyone interested in history was
During the trial, most of the developments were new and only partially comprehensible: the evolution of the various factions of the resistance movement and their partial collaboration with the enemy.
For the first time, I also learned of Colonel General Halder's involvement in the resistance and couldn't quite imagine it. In the evening, Exner, who was always interested in the world around him, asked me whether, as secretary to the General Staff, I had noticed what was going on behind the scenes. "Well, there was open criticism," I explained to him. "And it came from both sides, from those who were for

the regime, but especially from those who were against it. In the Wehrmacht, everyone was among themselves, so to speak, and everyone respected each other's opinions as long as it was about the common goal – the good of our country. And actually, there was agreement that after the victory, a thorough clean-up would be necessary." Exner cleaned his glasses and lit his pipe with laborious care. "I had a son," he began, "who was killed in action in 1940. He was originally a lawyer and then, out of sheer enthusiasm, became a soldier before the war. His death spared him the cruel disappointment. So I know what it was like for young people. But what interests me is: why didn't Beck's influence prevail earlier? As we can see, it was precisely the young members of the General Staff – think of Stauffenberg and Tresckow – who supported him at a later stage." "Well," I tried to explain, "there are various factors at play here. The young people certainly saw Beck's resignation in 1938 as being based far more on practical reasons than on moral ones. His resignation only became public knowledge in the fall after the Munich Agreement, when everyone could hope for peace. Tresckow and Stauffenberg, like the majority at the time, were initially by no means opponents of the regime. That only developed with the expansion of the war, which no one thought possible, the nature of Hitler's warfare, and later also with the knowledge of the things we have learned here."
"And the older generation?" asked Exner.
"Many of them were very skeptical at first. But here you have to consider what the rapid reconstruction and modernization after the trauma of the lost First World War meant to an officer with professional passion, and then the great
successes of the first year of the war. Looking back, 1938, after the Fritsch crisis, would have been the only time to act. But who could have known then how everything would turn out? Hindsight is always 20/20. Once the war started—you can see where that led..."
Exner tried to distract me, lighting his pipe once again.
"Tell me a little about your family," he asked. "Judging by your accent, you're not from Bavaria, are you?"
"Well, not from Bavaria, but my ancestors were linen weavers in Bohemia, so we're almost compatriots."
"Not from Prague, surely? That's where I had my first professorship."
"No, but from Alt-Benatky, not far from there. At that time, the Bendas were still serfs of Count Kleinau. He had my great-great-great-grandfather Franz trained in violin playing in Prague. Franz later bought his freedom and made his way to Prussia via Warsaw and the court of Dresden. On Quantz's recommendation, the then Crown Prince Frederick, later known as Old Fritz, had the young Benda play for him in Ruppin and was so impressed that he first appointed him Kapellmeister and later, after Quantz's death, concertmaster. He also brought the brothers, including the composer Georg Benda, to the royal court. In Menzel's painting, "The Flute Concert," you can see this concertmaster, Franz Benda, as the standing violinist on the right.
"Has this musical heritage been preserved?"
"Unfortunately, only in one family member, my cousin Hans von Benda, who conducted the Berlin Chamber Orchestra."
"Were the Bendas already ennobled under Frederick the Great?"
"Oh no, it didn't happen that quickly. It was my great-grandfather, domain director for Prince Thurn and Taxis, who was ennobled. So we are genuine Bavarian nobility."
"And then?
"My grandfather was both a farmer and a politician, co-founder and leader of the National Liberal Party, member of the Reichstag and the Prussian House of Representatives. At home, we had many mementos of the emperor, who came to my grandfather's estate in Rudow near Berlin once a year to hunt. There are also some delightful stories. My aunts, who were young girls at the time, had bottled the emperor's bath water

bottles and labeled them "His Majesty's bath water." And the old servant Franz had urged the emperor as he served him: "Take it, Your Majesty. There's no more."
Exner laughed cheerfully. "Did you know your grandfather?"
"Unfortunately not. And who does one really know in the true sense of the word? When I think about it, I know what I experienced with my parents, but not what they experienced as young people. With seven children on the estate in Pomerania, there wasn't much time for us, especially when Dad was away at war."
Many high-ranking foreign naval officers attended the interrogation of Grand Admiral Dönitz in the public gallery, including the commander of the American naval forces, Admiral Glasford. Alfred was very impressed by the structure of the evidence presented by Fleet Judge Kranzbühler: "Interrogation excellently structured – a proud day for the soldiers," he wrote to Dönitz's defense attorney. Particularly important for our case was the Grand Admiral's statement regarding Hitler's intention to terminate the Geneva Convention in March 1945. At the time, Dönitz and Jodl had succeeded in dissuading him from this ill-fated plan by means of an expert opinion tailored to his mentality.
During the subsequent interrogation of Grand Admiral Raeder, an incident occurred. The Russian prosecution insisted on presenting as evidence notes that the Grand Admiral had written during his imprisonment in Moscow. These included, among other things, value judgments about Ribbentrop, Göring, Keitel, Jodl, and Dönitz. His comments about Keitel sounded quite derogatory. Alfred said: "As old as the author is, he has not learned that one of the most difficult things in the world is to do justice to another human being. I believe that the positive judgments about me are being exploited by the prosecution . . . Keitel is deeply affected. I am considering how I can restore his honor in some way."
Such notes reached the defense attorneys via slips of paper that the guards carried back and forth between the client and the lawyer. If you started such a note with something like "Translation of document PS...," you could then write purely private matters on it. This made it possible for me to vent my feelings frequently, uncensored.
Our document book was now almost complete; only two cases remained: v. Schirach and Sauckel. As the tension gradually increased, the anniversary of the surrender approached. Alfred wrote: "Tomorrow it will be a year since I flew to Reims. I could write a book entitled 'To the bitter end' with more justification than people who lived in Switzerland from 1940 onwards.‡‡‡‡‡ My last joy was the loyalty and devotion of the united Führer Headquarters with the General Staff, and I will never forget the last image. As I drove through the barracks gate as a prisoner with an American officer, where everything had been occupied and ransacked, the two guards stood at attention—they had been forgotten. And when their rifles were taken from them at that moment, they stood so still."
Now there were only two days left until the hearing.
Everything was ready: for Professor Exner, the document books and the order of the questions that had been worked through beforehand; for Alfred, a short list of these questions as a reminder.
Unfortunately, we were seriously concerned about his state of health; his letter sounded depressed: "Tired, headache, hungry. The skipped meal, the lack of brown bread is noticeable... It won't be a failure, but it could be an incident. Will Professor Exner be able to sit? ... Everyone says that these days are very exhausting and that it makes a big difference whether the cross-examination begins at the beginning or end of the day...
The words of Pearl S. Buck, '§§§§§ ' are among the most beautiful I have ever encountered, and I have taken them deeply to heart, for they correspond entirely with my nature. Sometimes you joked when my commitment seemed too strong to you, but it was always the duty of setting a good example that was within me and the realization that every government regulation, even if it is burdensome to the individual, is beneficial to the community. When I think about my life and compare it to the charges, it strikes me as a grotesque joke. Nothing was more foreign to me than hatred. What a pity that Scherff is dead, who knew so much about it and

to whom alone I poured out my heart, which otherwise remained closed in these matters.******
I hope you will not make the mistake of thinking that my letters represent my whole true self. They are only an artificial, superficial part of me; my thoughts do not dwell solely on these external events, they go much further and deeper and thus automatically escape the public eye, which they must pass through before they reach you. You must feel and sense many things and not believe that only the small worries of prison and my own corpse have become my world. I know that every secret sorrow of the heart finds its way to you, even if unspoken. This should not make you sadder, but more faithful. Today I know that, in the end, everything that is genuine, deep, and pure in life turns out to be a blessing. I will think every hour of our decent, brave Wehrmacht and its soldiers, for whose struggle, duty, and idealism I want to be a worthy representative. The truth shall come to light and not be stifled a second time under a flood of propaganda under different circumstances. I know that my defenders will help to the best of their ability, even if they have a difficult task. It may be that ice shards will swirl glisteningly through the air as I fight my way to a firm footing. But when I quietly feel the rope being tightened, I will know that it is enough... It will be a tough battle lasting twelve hours, and I will always be on the offensive. Better anger and respect than pity and contempt. Dr. Laternser told me that everyone in the witness box is waiting for me with great anticipation. God be with us...
Sunday passed, the professors were allowed to visit their client and brought back a letter that showed me once again how versatile this beloved man was:
"Round after round, the hours drag on sluggishly, suddenly your hour stands in the way.
Now it is upon us. Perhaps you thought that today I would still be feverishly trying to get everything ready,
but that was not the case. After talking to Dr. Nelte in the morning, I slept soundly after lunch, then went for a walk, and then leafed through Velhagen's monthly magazines and found a novel that interested me. And suddenly there was no prison and no trial, I was somewhere else entirely. Where was I, actually? In life itself, in the mysterious depths of human passions and the human soul. Every person who wanders healthily and boldly through the mountains and valleys of life will encounter them at some point and somewhere. Then he casts aside all the experience and suffering of thousands of generations, forgets the many who perished in it, is lured by adventure, or is compelled by a power stronger than himself. Only the weary and the sick, who do not venture beyond the level paths of their garden, know nothing of those dark depths. They read about it in the newspaper, judge wisely and prudently, and are horrified. So that was my final preparation for the trial."
6.
Hearing of evidence – war criminals!††††††
"My person plays no role in this trial." Alfred Jodl before the International Military Tribunal,
June 4, 1946
When I arrived at the Palace of Justice with our team on the morning of June 3, it was very difficult for me not to be able to follow Alfred's interrogation myself. So I asked Ms. Jahrreiss to pay attention to incidental details that the defense attorneys did not have time for. Alfred had told me that he would be wearing long pants with general's stripes for the first time.
Professor Exner first questioned the defendant about his ancestry and origins. The court learned that Jodl's grandfather, father, uncle, brother, and father-in-law were all Bavarian officers. "Soldiering was in my blood." Because of its particular significance, Exner then immediately brought up the Jewish question and asked the defendant what his position was on it:
Jodl: "I was not an anti-Semite. I believe that no party, no state, no people, and no race, not even cannibals, is inherently good or evil, but only the individual."
Exner: "The prosecution claims that all the defendants shouted: 'Germany awake! Juda die!'"
Jodl: "As far as I am concerned, this claim is false. I have associated with individual Jews throughout my life. I have been a guest of Jews, and individual Jews have visited my home. But these were Jews who knew their homeland." Exner: "Did you also stand up for Jews?"

Jodl: "That too."
Exner: "Did you even know about the extermination of the Jews?" Jodl: "I know how improbable this explanation may sound here, but often the improbable is true and the probable is false. I can only say here, in full awareness of my responsibility, that I never heard of any extermination of Jews. I became suspicious when Himmler reported on the Jewish uprising in the ghetto. I didn't really believe in this heroic struggle, but Himmler immediately presented photographs of the bunkers and said, 'These are not only Jews, Polish nationalists have also taken refuge there, it is a bitter struggle! There was never a word about torture, crematoria, gas vans, torture like in the days of the Inquisition, or medical experiments. I can only say that even if I had heard about it, I would not have believed it until I saw it with my own eyes."
Professor Exner then moved on to Jodl's relationship with Hitler and quoted from the affidavit of General von Vormann, formerly Jodl's subordinate in the Army Operations Department in 1938:
"Major Jodl was my group leader in 1933. He was completely in the wake of the then Chief of the Army Command, General Frhr. v. Hammerstein, and rejected Hitler and the party. When Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor on January 30, 1933, Jodl was dismayed and astonished. I remember clearly that he instructed me to call a meeting of the officers in my group. At this meeting, he stated: 'Hitler has been appointed to the head of this Reich in accordance with the existing constitution. It is not our place to criticize this, especially the behavior of the Reich President. We must obey and do our duty as soldiers. Criticism of the new measures taken by the new Chancellor in their current form must also be refrained from as incompatible with our position in the future." His entire speech was tinged with concern and apprehension about the future course of events."
Jodl then described to the court how he was personally introduced to Hitler on September 3, 1939, after the war had begun, and how ambivalent his relationship with him was.
"At the beginning – until about the end of the Western Campaign – there was a strong sense of reserve. Then he gradually gained confidence in me until August 1942. Then came this tremendous crisis, when his relationship with me was one of biting sharpness and rejection.‡‡‡‡‡ I have never in my life experienced such an outburst of rage from a human being. An SS officer attended every briefing on the situation. Eight stenographers were appointed to write down every word from that day on. The Führer no longer shook my hand and hardly greeted me anymore. He had Field Marshal Keitel tell me that he could no longer work with me. I would be replaced by General Paulus as soon as Paulus had taken Stalingrad . . . During this whole time, I asked General Schmundt every third day to ensure that I would finally be given a front-line position with the Mountain Army in Finland – but nothing happened."(39)
Exner then asked whether Hitler had allowed political issues to be discussed.
Jodl: "In general, there was no discussion of political issues for us soldiers . . . Consultation on military issues depended on the current situation. When he was tormented by doubts, he would discuss military problems with someone for weeks or months. But once he had made up his mind and reached a spontaneous decision, all discussion was over." Exner: "The system of secrecy was often the subject of discussion here. Were you also involved in this secrecy?"
Jodl: "Yes, to an extent that only became clear to me during this trial. The Führer only told us about the events and occurrences at the beginning of the war, i.e., all the efforts made by foreign countries to prevent this war, to the extent that they were reported in the press. He spoke to politicians and the party in a completely different way than he did to the Wehrmacht. He spoke to the SS in a completely different way than he did to the Wehrmacht and the politicians. The secrecy surrounding the extermination of the Jews and the events in the concentration camps was a masterpiece of secrecy and a masterpiece of deception by Himmler."
After Exner referred to foreign newspapers, Jodl stated: "Foreign news itself was recorded and censored by the civilian press office at headquarters. I only received information that was of military interest. Reports on domestic politics, police matters, and the current situation were prohibited."

Jodl then described the daily routine at the Führer's headquarters: "I took part in over 5,000 meetings. This briefing on the military situation was also the issuing of orders . . . I did not take part in the subsequent political discussions with foreign politicians from neutral or allied countries. I did not even take part in the meetings on organization, armament, or the administration of the occupied territories. This was because the purely military situation meetings sometimes lasted up to six hours. I truly needed the time I had left for my work."

Professor Exner then asked Jodl whether he had also been successful in presenting counterarguments to Hitler. "Can you give an example?"

Jodl: "There were a lot of operational issues that will not be of interest to the court. But in the area that is of more interest to the court, it was, for example, Hitler's intention to denounce the Geneva Convention. I prevented that by objecting."

Jodl said of his attempts to exert influence:

"If it was not possible to prevent something that I felt compelled to prevent by voicing my opposition openly, then there was another approach that I often took, namely delaying tactics, a kind of passive resistance. I delayed processing and waited for a psychologically favorable moment to bring up the matter again. This approach was also sometimes successful, for example, in the case of the intention to expose certain low-level officials to lynch justice. There was no success with the "command order" (1)..."

Jodl then refuted Gisevius's claim that he had "isolated" Hitler and proved the opposite. After learning of the shooting of American prisoners at Malmedy, he immediately took the initiative to demand an investigation by the Commander-in-Chief West.

"Unfortunately, there were many reports circulating that were hostile to the Wehrmacht and incited against the Wehrmacht's correct and chivalrous attitude toward the Führer, and it was these reports that led to the decision to take brutal action. A great deal of harm could certainly have been avoided if we soldiers had been able to isolate the Führer. Canaris visited the Führer dozens of times. Canaris could report to him what he wanted and what he knew, and it seems to me that he knew considerably more than I did, as I was exclusively concerned with operational warfare. But he never said a word to me."

Jodl commented briefly on the prosecution's summary assertion that the defendants had enriched themselves in the occupied territories, saying, "That is slander against a decent German officer."

Exner now wanted to give the court a summary picture of Jodl's relationship with Hitler: "Tell us briefly what particularly impressed you about Hitler, what repelled you?"

Jodl: "Hitler was a leader of unusual stature. His knowledge and intellect, his rhetoric and his will ultimately triumphed in every intellectual debate. In a rare way, he combined logic, sobriety of thought, and skepticism with a vivid imagination that often foresaw what was to come, but was also often very misleading . . . His life at the Führer's headquarters was nothing but duty and work, and the modesty of his lifestyle was impressive . . ."

At this point, the court interrupted, stating that it had no interest in these remarks. Exner, who considered these questions so important for psychological reasons, now wanted to know from Jodl what had repelled him about Hitler. The presiding judge also rejected this question. Thus, the minutes do not record what Jodl had prepared as his answer:

"I cannot remember ever in my life having been so torn in my feelings as I was toward Hitler. My feelings fluctuated between reverence and admiration to hatred. His corrosive and caustic criticism of many things that were dear and valuable to me—the General Staff, the bourgeoisie, the nobility, the Reichswehr—repelled me more and more, especially in the second half of the war. I was never part of his private circle.

circle. He almost never spoke a personal word to me, except after the death of my first wife. After Hindenburg's death, there was no longer a personality who could have restrained him. The crisis of the winter of 1941 exhausted Hitler's nervous energy, and it cannot be denied that from that time on, Hitler sacrificed hundreds of thousands of German soldiers through his intransigence and his deliberate

suppression of operational flexibility in the leadership in the East. Thus, the ruthless means and methods of his actions drove him from one injustice to another and finally to his own death and that of Germany. His personality remained formidable—an infernal greatness."
When I waited for the defense attorneys at the main gate after the first morning of questioning, they came toward me waving. "Your husband certainly makes an impression with his great composure and calm," said Exner, "I'm curious to see the reaction in the press."
The next morning, The Times reported:
"Alfred Jodl, master planner of Hitler's OKW, described himself today in the witness box as a 'decent German officer,' words that will probably form the essence of his very clear defense ... He came out of his shell much more in the witness box than his previous reserved manner and generally unimpressive appearance would suggest."
Among the charges against Jodl was his speech to the Gauleiters in 1943 after Italy's defection. His commitment to Hitler is often criticized in this speech, but it must be taken into account that Jodl was supposed to provide moral support to the Gauleiters after the defection of their ally. However, the speech also contains some surprisingly candid words: "The Führer himself has often said that no leadership is free of mistakes, just as the history of war—to use a phrase coined by Schlieffen—consists entirely of a series of mistakes, and every war situation can naturally only be the product of mistakes."(40)
Jodl described to the court how reluctant he had been to approach this speech, if only for reasons of time: "I did not identify with the National Socialist Party in any way, but – as is natural for a general staff officer – with my supreme commander. For at that time, it was
was no longer a question of National Socialism or democracy. It was a question of the German people's existence or non-existence. And there were patriots in Germany too, not only in its neighboring countries, and I count myself among these patriots as long as I breathe . . "
The court later convicted Jodl not because of his declaration of loyalty to Hitler at the end of his speech, but because of a paragraph about the Atlantic Wall:
"There is little evidence that Jodl was involved in the forced labor program, and he seems to have concentrated on his function of strategic planning. However, in his speech to the Gauleiters on November 7, 1943, he said that it was necessary "to proceed with ruthless energy and harshness in Denmark, France, and the Netherlands in order to push through the work on the Atlantic Wall."
Professor Exner began the hearing of evidence on "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity" with questioning about the "Kommissarebefehl," Hitler's order to shoot captured Russian commissars. The political commissar in the Russian army was responsible for monitoring the loyalty of the troops and taking command of the unit if its leader was killed in action. The commissar wore a uniform with special insignia and was therefore a legitimate combatant.
Hitler disagreed. Long before the Russian campaign began, his instructions made it clear that the era of fair warfare was over and that a new, ideological type of warfare was beginning. On March 3, 1941, he issued guidelines to Jodl stating that this battle was more than just a military one: "It is a clash between two worldviews . . . These tasks are so difficult that they cannot be expected of the army . . . Bolshevik leaders and commissars must be rendered harmless." The order issued by Keitel in response to these remarks, "Guidelines in Special Areas to Directive No. 21 of March 13, 1941," took into account Hitler's order for the fateful appointment of the Reichsführer SS for Special Tasks, but, as already explained, there was no mention of liquidating the commissars.
Hitler then addressed the assembled
commanding officers, which Colonel General Halder noted in all its radicalism in his diary:
"Battle between two worldviews. Damning judgment on Bolshevism, which is tantamount to anti-social criminality; communism is a tremendous danger for the future. We must move away from the standpoint of soldierly comradeship. The commissar is not a comrade before and not a comrade after . . . Destruction of the Bolshevik commissars and the communist intelligentsia . . . This is not a matter for

courts-martial . . . The struggle will be very different from the struggle in the West . . . The leaders must demand of themselves the sacrifice of overcoming their reservations."
Hitler's remarks were received with great concern by the high command, but no protest was made.41 However, no immediate orders were issued, with the relevant authorities benefiting from the dramatic events unfolding during this period: the military coup in Belgrade followed by the Balkan campaign, the occupation of mainland Greece in response to British troops landing from Egypt; Rudolf Hess's flight to England, and the sinking of the battleship Bismarck.
The OKW did not issue a request for a commissar order. Then, however, with a two-month delay, the OKH sent a draft order to the OKW on May 6, 1941.42 Jodl's deputy, General Warlimont, summarized the OKH's draft order in a memorandum, made mitigating suggestions, and sent this memorandum to Jodl, who added marginal comments. 43
Warlimont's memorandum read (in excerpt):
"Dept. E F HQU 12. 5. 41 I. OKH has submitted a draft of 'Guidelines concerning the treatment of political dignitaries, etc.' for the uniform implementation of the order already issued on March 31, 1941 . . .
This draft provides for the following:
1. Political dignitaries and leaders (commissars) are to be eliminated.
2. If they are captured by the troops, an officer with disciplinary authority shall decide whether the person in question is to be eliminated. . ."
General Warlimont proposed that officials who
had not been guilty of any hostile acts should remain unpunished. Jodl wrote two marginal notes on Warlimont's memorandum: (top right) "Must be presented to the Führer once again" and (bottom left) "We must expect retaliation against German airmen, so it is best to present the whole action as retaliation."
Professor Exner then asked Jodl what he meant by this latter note.
Jodl: "This intention of the Führer, which was laid down in this draft order, was unanimously rejected by all soldiers. There were also very heated discussions about it with the commander-in-chief of the army. This resistance then ended with the Führer's characteristic statement: 'I cannot demand that my generals understand my orders, but I do demand that they obey them. In this case, I wanted to use my marginal note to show Field Marshal Keitel a new way in which it might be possible to get around this dreaded order for the time being." Exner: "As you may recall, the prosecution is criticizing the German military so harshly for this order because it was drafted before the war began."
Jodl: "It is true that, as a result of his ideological stance against Bolshevism, the Führer anticipated what was perhaps to be expected from the commissars. He justified this by saying, 'I have been fighting communism for 20 years, I know it. You don't know it.'" However, I must add that we, too, were to a certain extent influenced by what had been written about Bolshevism in literature throughout the world since 1917. Nevertheless, I was of the opinion that we should first wait and see whether the commissars behaved as the Führer had expected from the outset, and if this was confirmed, then we could intervene with reprisals. That was the meaning of my marginal note."(44)
The court, withholding the document containing the OKH draft, placed the sole blame on the OKW and stated in its ruling:
"A plan for the elimination of the Soviet commissars was included in the directive for 'Case Barbarossa.'"The decision on whether they should be killed without trial
was to be made by an officer. A draft containing Jodl's handwriting suggests that this be treated as a retaliatory measure, and he testified that this was his attempt to circumvent the plan."
For the sake of clarity, an addition based on the current state of research should be added here. The court either did not yet have all the documents relevant to the Commissar Order or did not charge Jodl with this. 46

When General Warlimont and David Irving accuse Jodl of being responsible for the so-called interim version and the final version of the order, this is a fundamental error.The last verifiable version before its enactment on June 6, 1941, dates from May 22, 1941. Jodl made an amendment to paragraph 1 of the preamble, issued an order on the application to the Politruks, sent a telegram stating that the Führer had rejected the repeal "after renewed discussion," and repealed the order on May 6, 1942. The Commissar Order was forwarded to the Wehrmacht units without General Warlimont's signature and distributed to the troops with additions by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army on June 8, 1941.
Professor Exner then moved on to the "Kommandobefehl," the order to shoot saboteurs behind the front lines without trial. Naturally, the prosecutors of the Western powers attached more importance to this order than to the Commissar Order because it affected their theaters of war.
The so-called "commandos" were special units, rarely more than 20 men strong, who were dropped behind enemy lines to carry out raids or acts of sabotage on facilities or production sites important to the war effort. According to Articles 1 to 3 of the Hague Land Warfare Convention, only legitimate combatants in uniform, but also those wearing a badge that is recognizable from a distance, are entitled to the protection of the Geneva Convention for prisoners of war. Guerrilla fighters or saboteurs, on the other hand, were usually punished with death according to the customs of war.
However, since the conclusion of these conventions in 1907, warfare had changed fundamentally. Parachuting allowed even legitimate combatants to get behind enemy lines. However, since the commando troops wore either civilian clothes over their uniforms or pieces of German uniforms (the son of British Field Marshal Alexander had been wearing a German field cap when he was captured in Africa
, but was not shot), the problem of a violation of international law arose.
The immediate cause of the "command order" was the behavior of the British landing forces in Dieppe. Jodl asked the court to be allowed to describe these circumstances in more detail: "There is a great deal at stake in this trial, not just me. My person plays no role in this trial."
Jodl pointed out the close connection between the Wehrmacht report of October 7, 1942, the threat against commandos announced therein and written by Hitler himself, and the order itself. He described the events in Dieppe:
"We had captured all the orders of the Canadian landing brigades from Dieppe ... These orders stipulated that, wherever possible, German prisoners were to have their hands tied. After some time, I received court records and witness statements, accompanied by photographs, from the Commander-in-Chief West; these clearly showed me that several people ... had been tied up in such a way that there was a noose around their necks and the end of the rope was tied around their bent lower legs, so that they had strangled themselves . . .
After some time, there was an attack by a commando unit on the island of Sarq. Again, we received official records that soldiers had been tied up, German prisoners. And finally, we captured the so-called English close combat regulations, and these blew the lid off the Führer's head ... They contained illustrations showing how to tie people up so that they kill themselves through the bondage, and it was precisely recorded at what time death occurs."(50)
Jodl then described how Hitler, in his agitation, had personally added the following paragraph to the Wehrmacht report:
"In future, all British terrorist and sabotage groups and their accomplices who behave like bandits rather than soldiers will be treated as such by German troops and, wherever they appear, will be ruthlessly killed in combat."
"This addition," Jodl explained, "came word for word from the Führer himself. After the Führer had written this last addition, he turned to Field Marshal Keitel and me and demanded an order to carry out this general announcement in the Wehrmacht report. He gave the slogan: 'But I do not want any courts-martial.'"

Jodl continued that even after carefully reviewing the Hague Convention, he still had a lot of legal doubts. He had initially commissioned an expert in international law to investigate the events surrounding Dieppe.
How did the matter proceed? The defense found it extremely difficult to work through the multitude of documents from the departments involved: the Wehrmacht Command Staff, the Wehrmacht Legal Department, and the Foreign Affairs Office.
"This seems to me to be a textbook example of delaying tactics," said the defense attorney when I presented him with the list of documents sorted by date. "Everyone passes the buck to someone else for ten days in the hope of avoiding responsibility. But that was bound to be hopeless, because Hitler had announced his intention to the whole world."
The story behind the document's creation quickly became clear: General Warlimont had instructed his quartermaster department to draft an order, but it passed the matter on to the legal department. The legal department consulted Admiral Canaris, who made it clear that only terrorist groups without uniforms or in German uniforms could be treated as bandits. After much back and forth, various preliminary drafts were presented to Hitler, which also included amendments by Jodl. However, the IMT did not use these documents against Jodl, even though they were available.
When questioned by his defense attorney, he commented:
"My intention was to avoid an order altogether. I actually expected that, following the announcement in the Wehrmacht report, which was not kept secret but was broadcast openly around the world, the British War Office would approach us again, either directly or via Geneva, as it had done several times before. I hoped that this would shift the whole matter to the level of the Foreign Office. But that did not happen. The British War Office remained silent. Ten days had passed, and nothing had happened. Then, on October 17, the Führer's chief adjutant, General Schmundt, came to me and said that the Führer was demanding the execution order. I replied, verbatim, that I did not know how to justify such an order under international law."
The fact that Jodl's refusal corresponds to the facts is shown by an entry made by Hitler's army adjutant, then Major Engel, on October 18, 1942, the day the order was issued:
"Heated discussion between the Führer and Jodl, who is vehemently opposed to special measures against sabotage groups. Draws attention to the consequences for Brandenburgers and SD personnel. F. expects deterrence to achieve everything. Once again, Keitel plays a pitiful role, stabbing Jodl in the back and reinforcing F.'s opinion. Brought draft for Kdo. order and had it signed. We, very concerned about this order, receive instructions from Jodl to work with OBs and chiefs to ensure that this order is treated similarly to the Commissar Order. Finally, F. has harsh words about the lukewarm response of the troops to deterrence measures. He knows full well that the army has either not followed the orders given, such as the Commissar Order, or has done so only hesitantly. The fault lies with the High Command, which wants to turn the soldier's profession into a clergy position. If he did not have his SS, what else would have been left undone? Jodl replied that international agreements also apply in wartime and are also for the good of one's own troops."(52)
Exner asked Jodl about his concerns:
Jodl: "The idea was that soldiers who acted outside the law of war were not entitled to be treated according to the law of war, a principle that is absolutely recognized in international law, for example, in the case of spies or francs-tireurs. This order was intended to serve as a deterrent against such combat methods used by British commando troops. But the Führer's order went further. He said that all commando troops were to be killed. And I had serious reservations about that . . . I was concerned that not only enemy soldiers who, to use the Führer's expression, really behaved like bandits would be killed, but also decent soldiers . . ."
Hitler had rejected several drafts submitted to him until, on October 18, 1942, he personally dictated the order to his secretary; it read:

"From now on, all opponents encountered by German troops during so-called commando operations in Europe or Africa, even if they appear to be soldiers in uniform or
destruction squads with or without weapons, in combat or on the run, to be killed to the last man . . . Even if these subjects appear to be making preparations to surrender when they are found, they are to be denied any mercy . . ."
Hitler was apparently aware that he would encounter fierce resistance from the entire Wehrmacht. This is the only way to explain why, on the same day, he issued an additional order—an event unprecedented in military history—which justified his first order and made non-compliance a serious offense: "Officers and non-commissioned officers who fail to comply due to any weakness are to be reported without exception and, under certain circumstances, held immediately accountable to the fullest extent."
Jodl distributed Hitler's additional order to the troops on October 19, 1942, following the command order, with the instruction that it was intended only for commanders and must not fall into enemy hands. It now apparently represented Jodl's main burden.
When questioned by Exner, Jodl described the efforts of the troops to exercise leniency; when asked whether he could have prevented the order from being passed on, he replied:
"No. If I had personally refused to pass on an order from the Führer, I would have been taken away on the spot . . ."
Jodl was then questioned about a telegram from Field Marshal von Rundstedt during the 1944 invasion: Von Rundstedt wanted to know whether the command order also applied to paratroopers. Keitel had answered in the affirmative, but with the following restriction:
"Enemy soldiers in uniform in the immediate combat zone of the landing head, i.e., in the area of the divisions fighting on the front line and the reserve divisions up to and including the general commands, are exempt."
The prosecution charged Jodl because of an addition to this telegram: "The same procedure is to be followed on the Italian theater of war."
The defendant responded: "This can be explained briefly. This order imposed a geographical restriction on the application of the command order . . . And I immediately adopted it for the Italian theater of war."
The verdict on this charge was as follows:
"On October 18, 1942, Hitler issued the command order and, one day later, an additional statement addressed only to commanding officers. The accompanying letter was signed by Jodl. Preliminary drafts of this order were prepared by Jodl's staff with his knowledge. Jodl testified that he was strongly opposed to it on moral and legal grounds, but that he could not refuse to forward it. He insists that he tried to mitigate the harshness of the order during its implementation by not informing Hitler when it was not carried out. He initialed the memorandum of the High Command of the Wehrmacht (OKW) dated June 25, 1944, which repeated the order after the landings in Normandy."
7.
Hearing of evidence – Warfare,
Cross-examination and questioning of witnesses
"I was always dominated by the thought of fighting for our Wehrmacht . . . for Germany . . ."
Alfred Jodl
On June 5, 1946, the hearing of evidence began regarding Jodl's involvement in the conduct of the war. Jodl was able to prove that, contrary to the prosecution's claim, there had been no finalized General Staff plan for the invasion of Austria. What Jodl did not mention was the fact that the completely improvised invasion plans had to be drawn up by the then Chief of the General Staff, Beck – presumably one of the first impulses for active resistance on Beck's part. He, Jodl, had advised the head of the operations department to place the military bands at the front of the troops and to protect all

drivers from a shower of flowers by providing them with glasses. The "flower war" was to prove the correctness of this view.
Also contrary to the indictment, Jodl was able to prove that he was not present at the meeting between Hitler and Austrian Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg. Here, too, Keitel's diary entry proved fatal to him: "Schuschnigg should tremble."
The prosecution also considered the entries made during the Sudeten crisis to be important, viewing them as a "crime" and forgetting that Jodl did not even know Hitler personally at that time and obtained his information mainly from Blomberg and Keitel. However, his criticism of the hesitant General Staff and his admiration for Hitler were unmistakable.
Professor Exner emphasized the purely factual entries.
He read from the diary:
"The Führer's intention not to touch the Czechoslovakian problem
has been changed by the Czech mobilization of May 21, which is taking place without any German threat and without any apparent reason. As a result of Germany's inaction, this will lead to a loss of prestige for the Führer, which he is not willing to accept again."
Jodl then described how the directive he had drafted, "It is my intention to destroy Czechoslovakia without provocation in the near future," was now amended by Hitler himself to: "It is my unalterable decision to crush Czechoslovakia in the foreseeable future through military action."
During his later interrogation by Exner, Jodl stated that he had believed Hitler's solemn declaration after the Munich Conference that he would no longer make any territorial claims.
Jodl then briefly described how, at the time of the occupation of Czechoslovakia, since October 1938, he had served as an artillery commander in Vienna and Brno and had therefore not been involved in the elaboration of the plans for the Polish campaign "with a single stroke of the pen."
Exner: "So it is correct to conclude that when you left Berlin, there was still no operational plan against Poland?" Jodl: "No."
After the first morning of questioning, The Times wrote: "None of the defendants has so far given a better and more accurate picture of the inner history of the war than General Jodl, who has a way of outlining and talking about things in the witness box that makes it clear that this was the man who worked out the strategic plans day after day until three in the morning ... One of the points in Jodl's defense is that he had no part in the plans to occupy Prague and attack Poland. In October 1938, he left the OKW and was so unaware of the danger of war that he bought tickets for a sea voyage in September."
Exner then moved on to questioning about the Norwegian campaign. Jodl described what an enormous decision it had been for the leadership to extend the defensive front by 3,000 km. He cited the British attack on the transporter "Altmark," the mining of Norwegian territorial waters, and, above all, the intelligence reports of an imminent British attack on Norway, which would have meant cutting off the economically vital ore supplies from Sweden. These intentions had been clearly confirmed by the British orders captured in Narvik and the capture of the British war correspondent Romilly.
When questioned about the Western Campaign, Jodl pointed out the strategic impossibility of remaining purely defensive and his doubts about the neutrality of the Netherlands and Belgium, which were fueled by reports from Admiral Canaris.
Exner: "The prosecutors accuse you of deceiving these countries and then invading them."
Jodl: "I was neither a politician nor the commander-in-chief of the Wehrmacht. I was under the impression, and indeed the provable impression, that the neutrality of these two states was in fact not being respected. And as far as the code of honor governing my actions is concerned, I must say that it was obedience. And that I am far from exercising it without limit and interpreting it as blind obedience, I believe there can be no doubt after my previous statements . . . If the prosecution is in a position today to bring charges against German officers at all, it owes this solely to this ethical principle of obedience to its own brave soldiers."

During the interrogation about Greece, Jodl proved that the British had already landed in Piraeus in March 1940, i.e., they had occupied Greece before the Germans.
The situation was different in Yugoslavia. Here, Hitler had spontaneously ordered the Balkan campaign after the coup, even though Jodl had warned in a statement that it was necessary to "wait for the political situation to be clarified." Hitler, however, had rejected this: "Nothing will come of it."
Regarding the Russian campaign, Jodl stated that Hitler had wrestled with this problem for months: "In my presence, the Führer never hinted at any reason other than purely strategic and operational ones. For months on end, he repeatedly stated: 'There is no doubt that England is pinning its hopes on this last mainland stronghold, otherwise it would have ended the war after Dunkirk. Agreements have certainly already been made behind the scenes. The Russian build-up is unmistakable. One day we are suddenly either subjected to cold-hearted political blackmail or attacked . . .* If the political premise was correct, namely that we were threatened by a war of aggression, then—from a military point of view—preventive war was also justified. That was how the political situation was presented to us soldiers."
American judge Biddle was so interested in this question that he addressed the witness directly: "What was your advice? You saw this danger coming, what did you do about it?"
Jodl: "On this point, as on most others, I submitted a written document in which I pointed out the enormous military implications of such a decision, the beginning of which we know, but the end of which no one can imagine . . ." 54
Exner concluded his questioning about the wars of aggression with the question:
"The prosecution has presented a whole series of campaigns as a long-premeditated and agreed plan of conquest, which you as conspirators provoked and carried out. What do you say to this presentation?"
Jodl: "I believe that I have already essentially corrected this historically distorted picture through my statements. The war in Poland broke out without me being involved in its preparation in any way. It expanded into a world war, contrary to the hopes of the soldiers. Everything had to be improvised for this war. There was nothing but the war of aggression against Poland. There were neither enough bombs nor ammunition. No soldier at that time thought of Norway, Belgium, Holland, Yugoslavia, Greece, or even Russia. No military agreements had been made with Italy or Japan. I acknowledge the account of the American Chief of Staff Marshall as absolutely correct in almost all points."
The court did not accept Jodl's statements. In its verdict, it stated the following regarding Jodl's participation in the wars of aggression:
"Although the defendant Keitel was his immediate superior, he reported directly to Hitler on operational matters. In a strictly military sense, Jodl was responsible for the actual planning of the war, and he is largely responsible for the strategy and conduct of operations.
Jodl defended himself by saying that he was a soldier sworn to obedience and not a politician, and that his staff and planning work left him no time for other matters."
Once again, it was the Times that reported on the interrogation with welcome objectivity:
"Jodl did more than defend himself in the witness box at Nuremberg. He attempted to correct what he calls the 'historical distortion' of the indictment, and certainly no single witness has shown a more cold-blooded detachment and at the same time a more accurate presentation of the facts. As a strategist, and probably beyond that, he appears to be the most important figure on the witness stand . . . As a soldier, he distanced himself from Hitler's political decisions, but as a strategist, he is quite prepared to acknowledge them as justified . . ."
After the conclusion of the hearing of evidence on his own behalf, Jodl was questioned by no fewer than twelve defense attorneys as a witness for their respective clients. "Jodl is apparently regarded as a Pythia who provides clear and convincing information, and every defense attorney wants to get something out of him for his client," Gaston Oulman commented on the radio that evening.

Dr. Laternser raised an important question: why did Hitler often exclude the highest military leaders from meetings? Jodl described Hitler's fear of the influence of the older generation on the young officers:
"For example, after our failed attack on Nettuno, he had lower-ranking troop leaders from these battles brought to the Führer's headquarters, starting with the regimental commander and ending with the company commander, and personally interrogated them for days without their superiors present and each one individually..."
Dr. Laternser: "Did you often witness vigorous objections from senior commanders?"
Jodl: "... I can say that there was not a single lecture in which the old traditional view of operations did not conflict with the Führer's revolutionary view... And it was a constant phenomenon that circles within the police in particular took every opportunity to use Himmler to campaign against the traditional, or as they called it, reactionary humanitarian and chivalrous attitude of the higher commanders."
Dr. Laternser then asked the witness about the efforts of the high command to end the war, which had become hopeless:
Jodl: "Ending the war is not a military decision, but a political one. But indirectly, I must say that there was no officer in a position of responsibility who did not present the military situation to the Führer in a completely sober, honest, and open manner... as it ultimately turned out. I, too, personally presented my opinion in writing in a memorandum to the Führer."
When asked about the mass deaths of Russian prisoners of war, Jodl explained the reasons at the time:
"I am aware of this because the Führer's adjutants were personally sent there and reported on it in my presence . . . The encircled Russian armies had put up fanatical resistance and had already been without any food for the last eight to ten days. They had literally lived on tree bark and roots and now fell into our hands in a state of exhaustion in which they were barely able to move. But it was impossible to transport them away. In this tense supply situation, with the railway network destroyed, it was impossible to transport them all. Most of them could only have been saved by careful hospital treatment. Very soon the rain set in, and later the cold, and that was the reason why so many of these prisoners from Vyazma died. . ."
And then came the cross-examination—the most eagerly awaited day, June 5, 1946. The British prosecutor, Mr. Roberts, the athletic Oxford student type, was to question Jodl. The evening before, Alfred wrote to me:
"This time I am the grenadier in the front line. He sees the huge artillery deployment, the tanks, and the fighter planes. He slept well and undisturbed and whistled so cheerfully and loudly this morning that the guards came out of the neighboring doors to listen."
At his request, I had painted him a small sign with the words: Quiet . . . Quiet . . . Quiet. He wanted to place it in front of him. As he entered the witness stand, the guard behind him whispered, "Give it to the black devil between the horns."
"Mr. Witness," Mr. Roberts began, "you told the court two days ago that soldiering is in your blood?"
Jodl: "Yes, that's right."
Mr. Roberts: "Very well. And yesterday you said that you were here to represent the honor of the German soldier. Is that correct?" Jodl: "I do so to a high degree."
Mr. Roberts: "You have presented yourself as an honorable soldier?"
Jodl: "I did so with full awareness."
Mr. Roberts: "You have presented yourself as a truthful man?"
Jodl: "I have presented myself as such a man, and I am one." (Silence - Silence - Silence)
Mr. Roberts: "And do you believe that what you say you have had to do during the last six or seven years has tarnished your honor?"
Yodel: "My honor has certainly not been tarnished, because I have personally preserved it."

Mr. Roberts: "Very well. You say that your honor has not been tarnished. During the last six or seven years, when you allegedly had to say such things, has your love of truth remained at the same high level?"
Jodl: . . . (Silence—silence—silence)
Mr. Roberts: "Are you unable to answer this question?"
Jodl: "I think I am too stupid for this question."
Mr. Roberts: "Well, if you are too stupid, then I will drop the question and move on."
And then began a cross-examination that the Times wrote about the next day:
"It sounds like a distant cry from the Normandy coast on this second anniversary of D-Day,§§§§§§ as Jodl, master planner of the Wehrmacht, clutches the side walls of the witness stand to withstand five hours of relentless cross-examination by Mr. Roberts."
Jodl was first questioned about his career, then about the invasion of Austria:
"You claim that the people were very happy to see you there?"
Jodl: "The people under my command were happy about this officer, I can tell you that."
Mr. Roberts: "They had to pretend to be, whether they were or not, didn't they?"
Jodl: "No, they certainly didn't have to. In any case, they didn't need to write me enthusiastic letters long after I was gone, which I received throughout the war from these Austrians, to whom my heart belonged..."
Regarding the landing in Norway, the prosecutor asked:
"Why did you have to break your word to Norway and inflict unspeakable suffering on the inhabitants of that country, just because the British had invaded Norwegian territorial waters and freed a few hundred prisoners? Where is the logic in that?"
Jodl: "You have pulled out just one small nail from this tremendously vivid picture of the impending occupation of Norway. But there are a hundred such nails . . . I can only say that we were under the definite subjective impression that we were carrying out an operation at the last minute, for which the English troops had already embarked . . ."
At the end of the questioning about the wars of aggression, the prosecutor had two more questions: one concerned the bombing of Belgrade:
"How many civilians do you believe were killed in the first stage of this interlude during the bombing without warning?"
The answer came as quick as lightning:
"I can't say, but certainly only a tenth of the number killed in Dresden, for example, when you had already won the war."
"I would now like to ask you one last question," the prosecutor concluded his questioning about the wars. "Don't you think that this long series of broken treaties will dishonor Germany's name for centuries to come?" Jodl: "That could be the case if, after careful examination of the Russian documents, historical research provides conclusive proof that Russia had no intention of politically blackmailing or attacking us. Then yes, otherwise no."
Mr. Roberts now moved on to the "war crimes," and new documents, "surprise documents," were presented that the defense was not familiar with. First, a document about the Norwegian campaign, a telegram signed by Jodl I. A.
telegram to the XIX Army High Command in northern Norway. 55 Mr. Roberts quoted from it:
"Due to the Norwegian population's unwillingness to evacuate voluntarily, the Führer has approved the proposals of the Reich Commissioner for the occupied Norwegian territories and ordered that the entire Norwegian population east of the Lyngen Fjord be forcibly evacuated in the interests of their own safety, and that all dwellings be burned down or destroyed. The Commander-in-Chief of Northern Finland is responsible for ensuring that the Führer's order is carried out ruthlessly. This is the only way to prevent the Russians, with their strong forces, supported by the dwellings and the local population,

from following our retreating movements in winter and soon appearing in front of the Lyngen position. Compassion for the civilian population is out of place.
That's a cruel order, witness, isn't it?"
Jodl: "No, not entirely. I have something to explain. As I already described, the order is typical in that it was not issued by the soldiers, but was forced upon the Führer by Reich Commissioner Terboven against the will of the soldiers. In practice, the order was mitigated by the troops in agreement with my brother, who was the commanding general there,******* , so that in fact only what was militarily necessary and absolutely necessary according to Article 23 of the Hague Convention on Land Warfare was destroyed. The Wehrmacht commander protested against Terboven's view, and I vigorously repeated this view to the Führer. Nevertheless, he insisted on this order."
Mr. Roberts: "I believe that when you were questioned, you said that your brother had complained about this order?"
Jodl: "That too: he raged about this order."
Although this order had clearly come from Hitler and the reasons for the destruction were later approved under international law in a subsequent trial, Jodl was found guilty on this point:56
"On October 22, 1944, Jodl ordered by telegram the
evacuation of all persons from northern Norway and the burning of their houses so that they could not provide any assistance to the Russians."
As the next "surprise document," Mr. Roberts presented a statement by Jodl on Hitler's intention, expressed in the spring of 1945, to withdraw from the Geneva Convention on the protection of prisoners of war. I clearly remember the day—it was February 19, 1945—when Alfred told me about this at night. He had worked on his statement throughout the night and, in twelve pages—tailored to Hitler's mentality, but clearly warning against it—he had spoken out against it:
"Formally, from a legal standpoint, it will be difficult to prove that the Western opponents have deliberately violated international law on a large scale. They bend the law as they see fit, but they do not break it. If they do so anyway, they excuse themselves according to all the rules. In the fighting at the front, all sides adhere to existing agreements and customary law. In the war of terror, no state is bound by any agreement. From a purely legal point of view, therefore, we will be in the wrong vis-à-vis enemy propaganda if we terminate the agreement."
Jodl then briefly outlined the advantages and, in detail, the disadvantages of termination. As a distraction, and knowing that Hitler was not open to moral arguments, he added:
"Adherence to the commitments we have entered into does not in any way require us to impose restrictions on ourselves. If, for example, the British sink a hospital ship, this must be exploited for propaganda purposes as before. This in no way prevents us from immediately sinking a British hospital ship in retaliation and then, like the British, expressing our regret that we made a mistake."
Jodl knew full well that no more ships were being sunk at the time he made his statement.
Our defense had been aware of this document beforehand, but had refrained from questioning it, considering that Hitler had not terminated the convention because of the expert opinions of Jodl and Dönitz. The prosecutor now reproached Jodl for not having contradicted Hitler with moral arguments:
"That is very honorable, isn't it?"
Jodl: "All I can say is that this was the only method that could achieve success with the Führer, and this success was achieved as a result. If I had come up with moral arguments or purely legal ones, he would have said, 'Leave me alone with this stupid chatter!' and would have carried out the termination. But these things gave him pause for thought. That was the reason why he did not carry it out. You must concede that after five and a half years, I knew best how to achieve something good and prevent something bad. Success was what mattered, and I achieved it."
In its verdict on this charge, the court found: "When Hitler considered terminating the Geneva Convention in 1945, Jodl took the view that the disadvantages of such a step would outweigh its advantages. On February 21, he told Hitler that adherence to this convention would not interfere with

the conduct of the war, citing as an example the sinking of a British hospital ship as a retaliatory measure, which would then be described as an accident. He said that he had acted in this way because it was the only position Hitler would consider, and that moral or legal arguments had been ineffective. He also took the view that in this way he had prevented Hitler from denouncing the Convention."

In Jodl's small prison diary, there is an entry dated June 7, 1946, the beginning of the cross-examination by the Russian prosecution: "149th session, 3:00 p.m. Russian cross-examination." Note from the stenographer: "We are praying for you." This was the second expression of sympathy from the other side that Jodl received, and he wrote that his eyes welled up when he heard these softly whispered words beside him.

On June 7, the interrogation by Russian Colonel Prokrovsky began. "Your husband was obviously irritated from the start by irrelevant questions and probably also by poor translation," Exner told me at noon. When, for example, the prosecutor insisted that Jodl had been Keitel's "deputy," Jodl commented, "Colonel, you are naturally having difficulty following these military matters, but that is ridiculous."

When questioned about the "preventive war" against Russia, Jodl again pointed to his warning "against this experiment, which should really only be undertaken if there is no other way out. I don't want to presume to judge whether there might have been a political option that was not exhausted . .

Jodl was annoyed by the numerous forged documents: "This is a fantasy." - "Any soldier would throw this in the trash immediately." - "A scrap of paper."

As a "surprise document," the Russian prosecutor presented the "Handling of Propaganda" signed by Jodl and wanted to know whether the Propaganda Ministry, i.e., Goebbels, had been involved in this.57 Jodl commented on this interesting question by saying that it had once been agreed in Geneva that propaganda was not punishable under international law.

The Russian prosecutor then began to question Jodl about a document that his defense attorney had already asked him about. The order signed by Jodl I. A. to the OKH not to accept any offer of surrender from Leningrad58read as follows:

"The Führer has again decided that a surrender of Leningrad and later of Moscow is not to be accepted, even if it were offered by the opposing side. The moral justification for this measure is clear to the whole world. Just as the use of time fuses in warfare has created the gravest dangers for the troops, this must be expected to an even greater extent in Moscow and Leningrad. The Soviet radio itself has announced that Leningrad is undermined and will be defended to the last man.

Serious epidemics are to be expected . . . Small unblocked gaps that allow the population to flee to inner Russia are therefore to be welcomed."

Jodl explained to the prosecutor:

"The first reason was a report from Field Marshal Leeb, commander-in-chief of Army Group North outside Leningrad. He reported that the population of Leningrad was already beginning to push west and southwest toward his lines. He pointed out that it would be completely impossible for him to provide for this population of millions if it somehow fell into his hands. This was because the Army Group's supply situation was catastrophic. That was the first reason. Shortly before, we had occupied Kiev, when one

series of large explosions. Most of the city center was burned down. 50,000 people were left homeless. The commander initially thought it was sabotage, until we captured a demolition map. This map contained about 50(1)to 60 objects in Kiev that had been prepared for demolition over a long period of time . . . for the most part, the demolition was to be triggered by ignition via radio waves . . .

The Führer expected what had happened in Kiev, Odessa, and Kharkov to also happen in Leningrad. That was the decisive reason why he put this order in writing."

When asked by the prosecutor why gaps were to be left for the population to flee, Jodl testified:

"We had learned our lesson in Paris. There, it had become necessary to use the transport capacity of four divisions and the entire Bavarian relief train, which could feed tens of thousands, to save the population from starvation. In Leningrad, this was impossible; the railways had been destroyed, the

tracks had not yet been re-nailed to a different gauge, and it was impossible to help this city of millions. There would have been a catastrophe, and that is why the idea arose to push them eastward into Russian territory, an idea that, incidentally, contradicts the thesis that has already been put forward here, namely that we wanted to exterminate the Slavs."

The court ruled on this charge in its judgment: "On October 7, Jodl signed an order stating that Hitler would not accept any offer of surrender of Leningrad or Moscow, but on the contrary insisted that these cities be completely destroyed.60 He explained that this was because the Germans feared that these cities would be undermined by the Russians in the same way as Kiev. A surrender was never offered!" Jodl was able to prove that he had advocated for leniency in the "Regulations on Combating Bands" signed by him on November 11, 1944: "The burning of villages as a reprisal is prohibited, as it inevitably only creates new partisans."61

Finally, Colonel Prokrovsky asked the witness: "How can you explain that you accepted a leading position in the military machinery of the German Reich after a man whom you yourself described as a charlatan had come to power?"

Jodl: "Because over the years—at least between 1933 and 1938—I had become convinced that he was not a charlatan, but a gigantic personality who ultimately, however, became infernal in his greatness."

On June 7, Professor Jahrreiss began questioning the four witnesses approved for Jodl. Jodl had written a circular letter to these four—Prof. Dr. Percy Schramm, General Horst Frhr. von Buttlar, General August Winter, and Major i. G. Herbert Büchs:

I am sorry that your testimony has caused you to suffer worse conditions than before. Do not make this sacrifice for me, but for the German officer corps. I will fight a bitter battle for historical truth. I will appear before this court as I did before Adolf Hitler: openly, manfully, and fearlessly. I have only one request: that you, too, prove yourselves to be the upright men I have always held you to be in this unfamiliar battlefield, and that you do not allow yourselves to be shaken in your upright and soldierly attitude by cunning questions and hidden threats. For you are to complement and underline the impression that I myself am willing to give.

The court should recognize that the Wehrmacht leadership was not a conspiracy of gangsters, but a staff of officers who had their own traditions and their own ideas, but who, true to their oath and their duty, obeyed the man whom the German people had chosen as their leader in accordance with democratic law. Every officer in the Wehrmacht leadership staff knows that this obedience was not slavish, but very often manly resistance to the limits of what was possible."

The first witness for Jodl was the former head of the Army Operations Department in the Wehrmacht High Command, General Horst Frhr. von Buttlar. A highly qualified general staff officer, Buttlar, like his equally talented predecessor von Lossberg, was held in high esteem by Jodl. The time allotted was too short to go into general staff details. Buttlar was therefore questioned about what was important in relation to "war crimes": the division of labor in the Wehrmacht High Command and Jodl's lack of responsibility with regard to prisoners of war.

The second witness, Major i. G. Büchs, was questioned on a similar topic: he described Jodl's delaying tactics regarding

Hitler's intention to have shot-down terror pilots lynched or shot by the population. Büchs denied that Jodl belonged to the "party clique" in the Führer's headquarters: "I witnessed Colonel General Jodl simply returning letters or complaints from Bormann with very rude marginal comments."

The next witness, Major (ret.) Professor Dr. Percy Schramm, a professor of history at the University of Göttingen in civilian life, had kept the war diary of the Wehrmacht command staff from 1943 until the end of the war. As a trained historian, he could thus be considered a key witness for the last years of the war. Tall, slim, with strangely pointed ears and a distant gaze, he could appear absent-minded without letting his partner notice how keenly he observed and understood human nature. The defense attorney was keen to learn something about Jodl's activities from this scientist. Prof. Schramm: "The scope of the colonel general's activities cannot be overestimated. I have evidence that in 1944 alone, 60,000

telegrams passed through the telegraph office of the Wehrmacht command staff, according to a report to me by the officer in charge. In addition, there was the courier correspondence, which was of course much more extensive, and then the internal correspondence between the individual departments. Most of this correspondence also passed across the Colonel General's desk."

Jahrreiss then asked the witness if he knew anything about Hitler's ban on generals resigning.

Schramm: "Yes. I remember very clearly an order from the middle of 1944, which repeated in a very harsh manner what had already been ordered before my time - that must have been in 1940/41. This order, which was about one and a half typewritten pages long, was written in a very forceful manner and essentially stated that every commander-in-chief – and accordingly also the subordinate command authorities – had the right to raise objections to the measures taken by the supreme leadership, but that he then had to carry out this order unconditionally, i.e. to do something that was against his intentions. It was further stated that it was impossible for a commander-in-chief to resign as a result. The reason given for this was that it was not

possible for a non-commissioned officer in the trenches to resign from his company commander if he disagreed with his orders."

Prof. Schramm denied that Jodl had been a "party general" and said of his "ambition": "I can answer that question with a resounding 'no'. I know from my circle of acquaintances and from conversations with him himself that he found the whole diplomatic machinery unpleasant, as he rejected it because it should never have anything to do with soldiers. If the colonel general had been ambitious, he would certainly not have chosen the position that was least suitable for that. In doing so, he exposed himself to criticism from below, where people were unaware of the context, so that he was heavily criticized from that quarter. And he was not given the recognition he deserved from above either. Personally, I always found it very strange, even grotesque, that at the moment Hitler died, the colonel general did not have many more German war decorations than I did as a major in the reserves. I never saw whether he had any foreign ones. I never saw him with a foreign medal."

"We had a whole box of foreign medals," I told Jahrreiss that evening, "including the Italian Order of the Crown of Savoy. From Hitler, Jodl received only the standard clasp for the EK I and, after the assassination attempt, the Wound Badge. He then received the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves from Grand Admiral Dönitz at the very end of the war. But I've only heard this through rumors; it was taken from him when he was captured."

I had briefly met the last witness, General of the Mountain Troops August Winter, a wiry mountain hunter with the head of a scholar, in Berchtesgaden and had come to respect him as a very intelligent and sensitive person. He was asked about the Russian campaign:

"At the time, we had the subjective impression that we were entering an offensive march that was already underway . . . We had a number of facts that confirmed this impression. First, the strength of the troops facing us; then the very close to the front and forced troop deployment; the exceptionally strong armored units, which far exceeded what we had expected; the deployment of a relatively strong group on the Hungarian border, which we could not explain with defensive considerations. And one point that I remember as particularly striking: during the first eight days, we found maps among the captured staffs that extended far into German and originally Austrian territory, which we could not reconcile with purely defensive considerations either."(62)

Professor Exner read out a few more questionnaires with their answers, then our evidence hearing was over. We were satisfied and very proud of our client, because everyone at the press conference asked me how dignified, clear, and courageous Jodl had been in his defense.

"Everyone agrees on the witness," Dr. Laternser told me, and Keitel wrote to me that Jodl had said many things that he had failed to mention.

But Jodl himself had been very shaken by these days. He was lying on his cot with a fever. The tension still lingered in his letter:

"Forgive me for not writing, I was too tired the day before yesterday and too agitated yesterday evening... It was perhaps the greatest psychological strain of my life and cost me over five pounds of my weight. I sweated like a horse until the evening. Sometimes I lost my temper when I felt too much incomprehension in a question. I was always dominated by the thought of speaking for our Wehrmacht, for Germany, for you, and for the honor of my name. I was disappointed by the cross-examination. I expected at least an attempt to prove to me that England did not want to land in Norway, that Holland and Belgium were truly neutral, and that Russia did not want to attack us. Not a word about that. The English prosecutor at least brought some documents that were completely new to me, while Russian Colonel Rudenko brought almost only things that I had nothing to do with. That's why I was often annoyed; truly factual information would have led me to much better answers. ... All in all, I was satisfied, and I believe it was good for all soldiers that I was personally charged and thus had the opportunity to give a comprehensive account of the truth. That would not have been possible as a member of the group ... I would have much preferred to deal with the French, for whom I always had an unhappy love, rather than with the Russians ..."

Jodl's statements had clearly aroused the interest of the foreign journalists, and two well-known reporters asked him to answer questions: Louis Lochner, USA, about a record of July 20, and Helga Knudsen, Denmark, about Admiral Canaris, his behavior toward General Franco, and the work of the Abwehr. Despite all the sympathy Jodl had for Canaris, his answers were at times very critical:

"Throughout the war, I was dissatisfied with the work of Canaris' intelligence service. He brought in thousands of reports, but I learned nothing about the enemy's decisive intentions. When confronted, he pointed out that he had reported the American landing in French North Africa. That was true, but he had also reported every other possibility with some agent report... I did not receive a single report from Canaris about Italy's impending defection, but expected it from other sources. He was always distracted, illogical, rushed, nervous, never gave a clear answer, and could not stay in one place for long. I considered him an overly nervous pessimist, but not a traitor. He always made a loyal and cordial impression on me and during his presentation to Hitler; he never contradicted me. It is certain that, due to his field of work, he recognized the moral inferiority and criminal activities of Himmler and Heydrich at an early stage, which is sufficient to understand and morally justify his behavior in many respects. But it cannot explain everything, such as the fact that he accused me and Keitel of betraying the attack in the West on May 10, 1940, when I proved to Canaris from captured Dutch orders that the timing of our attack must have been known to the enemy."

Meanwhile, Pentecost had arrived. I had described the Gothic church of St. Lorenz to my husband, how the light green of the birch trees made one completely forget the destruction inside. From his "Romanesque cell," as Alfred subsequently called it, he replied:

"You begin your last letter with reflections on the world of dreams and reality. Both flow into each other in our current existence in such a way that they can no longer be separated. If the philosophy were correct that longing is everything and fulfillment is nothing, then we should now be the happiest people.

But I consider this to be a philosophical statement made by the disappointed. I believe that fulfillment is everything. The fulfillment of a task, of love, of life—and longing is the driving force behind the fulfillment we desire. Incidentally, a few days ago, Field Marshal von Manstein called out a few particularly appreciative words to me in passing, which made me very happy."

Two days later, his letter was serious in tone:

"Now let us look fate squarely and defiantly in the eye. The victors' court is and remains a political instrument. It will always uphold the appearance of justice. But its task is to punish the 'main war criminals'. The statute has also already set the course, which it cannot deviate from. Therefore, even in my not unfavorable case, I consider any verdict possible, from the death penalty to acquittal. For there is no criminal code for my deeds. No verdict will surprise me; I have lived through and overcome every one. 1. Death penalty

For me, it is not the worst thing, even if the pain of leaving you behind alone is unspeakable. I will not submit a petition for clemency in this case. But I consider this case only possible, not probable. There will and must be death sentences. But in order to maintain the appearance of justice, there will also be gradations, and I believe that my case is one that lends itself to a lenient sentence.

2. Imprisonment

The sentence may be:

a) Prison

b) Imprisonment

c) Fortress

In terms of time, it can be a short prison sentence (up to 2 years), mitigated (3 to 4 years), or long (5 years or more), which is worse, much worse than death.

I do not consider a complete acquittal impossible, but I do consider it very unlikely; my mind warns me and refuses to entertain the thought. But my senses are not always controlled by my mind, and so I have already lived through this case in my dreams in every detail. I do not want my words to raise your hopes, but neither do I want them to cause despair. Today, I believed that I could

I could venture a glimpse into the mysterious future with you, which you alone have already judged a hundred times."

This letter from Alfred presented me with a difficult decision, namely whether to address the possibility of a death sentence at all. I had to respond to his remarks somehow, and so I thought I would do so cautiously by writing to him that his chances of survival were better than those of the two admirals. I based this on the bets announced daily in the press, which were continuously noted on a large board. At that time, the bets stood as follows:

Name	Guilty	Not guilty	Death penalty	Prison*
Göring	32	—	32	—
Hess	32	-	17	8 zbG
Ribbentrop	32	-	32	-
Keitel	32	—	29	1 zbG
Kaltenbrunner	32	-	32	
Rosenberg	32	-	24	5 IG
Frank	32	-	27	4 IG, 1 zbG
Frick	32	1	12	10 IG, 10 zbG
Streicher	30	2	13	9 IG, 11 zbG
Radio	30	2	5	6 IG, rest zbG
Shaft	32	7	4	4 IG, rest zbG
Dönitz	32	-	14	5 IG, rest zbG
Raeder	32	-	13	2 IG, rest zbG
Schirach	31	1	9	4 IG, rest zbG
Sauckel	32	-	29	11 IG, rest zbG
Jodl	31	1	13	1 IG, rest zbG
v. Papen	29	3	6	7 IG, rest zbG
Seyß-Inquart	28	4	3	7 IG, rest zbG
Speer	28	4	3	7 IG, rest zbG
Baron von Neurath	28	4	3	7 IG, rest zbG
Fritzsche	25	7	1	1 life imprisonment, remainder suspended sentence

* IG = life imprisonment zbG = temporary imprisonment

I was to bitterly regret writing to my husband about this table, which did not seem unfavorable to me, because in doing so I was the first to raise the possibility of the death penalty. His reply made me realize how he really felt:

"I am currently reading a book that I perhaps should not have read: 'A Tale of Two Cities' by Charles Dickens. London and Paris, the story of a love affair. The 1775 trial in London, which was conducted in exactly the same way as trials are conducted today, amused me. But when I got to the part where the young woman stood every day for over a year in a spot where her husband could see her from his dungeon, it really got to me. The soul and the mind are wounded, and you have to treat them gently. And that's why I want to ask you something. Everything had to be said clearly and soberly at some point, and now it's done, and it was good and right. But in the situation I am in and may find myself in, perhaps the only happiness one can live on is illusion. Dreaming while awake and asleep are illusions, and yet they are a precious gift. Sobriety is the world of men, I have enough of it. Grant me the illusion in the future as well; it belongs to the world of women, and if faith can move mountains, then a man in my situation will overlook the thorns of sober reality and, greedy as one who is languishing, breathe in only the scent of roses, which even the greatest illusion can give him. Perhaps it is a weakness of mine to seek such a narcotic. But my soul is sick, I do not want to resign myself, I want to hope and believe in shared happiness . . ."

On July 4, 1946, the defense began reading its closing arguments. Professor Jahrreiss first delivered a plea on behalf of the entire defense on the "breach of international peace and its punishability."(63) Neither the American nor the British and French chief prosecutors attended Jahrreiss's plea. We were all the more pleased with the extremely positive reaction in the press. Professor Exner had also made an important contribution to the overall defense: a study of the Anglo-Saxon concept of "conspiracy." "A conspiracy with a dictator is a contradiction in terms; Hitler would have smiled if someone had said that he had made an agreement with his ministers and generals to wage this or that war. In truth, Hitler complained that the generals were conspiring against him, and he used these words precisely in reference to those who are accused today of conspiring with him."

Special expert opinions of this kind were incorporated into almost all of the closing arguments. For example, the closing argument of Hamburg lawyer Dr. Siemers for Grand Admiral Raeder contained an expert opinion by international law expert Professor Mosler on the Norwegian campaign, and Dr. Horn commented on the concept of "war of aggression" in his closing argument for Ribbentrop. Only one lawyer, Dr. Alfred Seidl, was not allowed to read his special expert opinion on the Treaty of Versailles; the court expressly prohibited any statements on this subject.

The defendants followed the closing arguments with the utmost attention. Dr. Dix told me with a smile at breakfast: "Your husband gave me a 'very good' grade in writing. I appreciated that very much after my witness Gisevius had attacked him." Alfred was most impressed by Kranzbühler's closing statement for Dönitz: "A historic act, courageous, objective, in the best German tradition."

On the afternoon of July 19, Professor Exner began to present his closing arguments. Among other things, Exner commented on Jodl's responsibility for the various campaigns:

"Who is responsible for this decision—politically, criminally, morally—depends on the constitutional structure of the specific state, on the way in which foreign policy decisions are made in that state in accordance with the constitution . . . I could imagine, however, that the chief of the Wehrmacht command staff would be complicit—at least morally—in a war of aggression if he incited war at the decisive moment or, pointing to his own military superiority, advised the political leadership to seize the moment to carry out far-reaching plans of conquest. But if, in the event that the political leadership decides in favor of war, he drafts the war plan himself and then carries it out, he is doing nothing more than his obvious duty . . .

Consider the extraordinary consequences that would result from the opposite view: the competent authority declares war, and the chief of staff, who considers it contrary to international law, does not go along with it. Or, fortunately, the chief of staff shares the same view as the head of state, but an army commander has reservations and refuses to march . . .

The truth of the matter is this: as long as there is no supranational authority that impartially determines whether, in a specific case,

case, as long as there is no supranational power that protects those who comply with this duty from punishment for high treason and desertion, an officer cannot be held criminally responsible for breach of the peace. Under all circumstances, a contradiction must be pointed out here: on the one hand, the prosecution accuses the generals of not being pure soldiers but also politicians; on the other hand, it demands that they demonstrate against the political leadership, in short, that they should not be pure soldiers but politicians.

Regarding Jodl's authority, Exner stated:

"He was the Führer's advisor on all operational matters, in a sense the Chief of Staff of the Wehrmacht. The role of the Chief of Staff in all countries is not one of command, but of advising, assisting, and executing. He was not Keitel's Chief of Staff, but the head of the most important operational office in the OKW."

In his criminal law remarks on "mens rea," or subjective guilt, the defense attorney stated:

"The prosecution repeatedly emphasizes that Jodl was 'present' at this or that speech. On a single page of the British 'trial brief,' I read six times: 'Jodl was present at . . .' What does that mean legally? Presence can be of great importance for the evaluation of a later act . . . but presence does not make one guilty. If one wants to hold Jodl, the General Staff officer, responsible for the conduct of this war at all, then it is certainly of crucial importance how he viewed the entire situation . . . If, on the basis of the reports available to him, he believed that there were facts that justified waging war, then Jodl cannot be accused of knowingly waging an illegal war . . .

It is impossible to understand Jodl's situation and to make a proper assessment of his actions without considering the two men who stood opposite each other here.

The prosecutors have made it easy for themselves. If Hitler were still alive, he would be sitting in the dock first and foremost. Now that he is dead, his person is being trivialized in the assessment of the other defendants, and their behavior is being treated as if he had never existed. This violent man, this infernal figure," as Jodl called him, cannot be dismissed as a "quantité négligeable" when it comes to doing justice to the actions of those closest to him.

Jodl now stood opposite this man: Jodl, an upright soldier, exceptionally talented, but never aspiring to anything other than being a conscientious soldier, sober, averse to all diplomacy, raised in the ideals of the German officer corps: bravery, loyalty, obedience, trained in the hundred-year tradition of the German General Staff, which knew only duty, selfless work, and more work.

It goes without saying that this man, working at Adolf Hitler's side, was bound to fall under his spell. One must take into account the time in which this happened . . . Nevertheless, Jodl was considered the one who dared to oppose the Führer the most . . . One should therefore not believe that command and obedience are what make Jodl's behavior during these years completely understandable to us. It was rather the much broader idea of fulfilling his duty . . . Complete dedication to what was assigned to him as his area of responsibility in critical times. Consider the situation in which Jodl found himself: the struggle for the survival of his fatherland, the demands of an increasingly cruel war, and at the same time the views of his supreme commander, which deviated from all tradition, on what was permissible or impermissible in war. It is quite clear that Jodl was bound to come into conflict, into conflict with Hitler, into conflict with himself . . .

Allow me to make a comparison: you, gentlemen of the court, feel bound by the charter of the court, as you have already announced to us. Now, some of you may have had doubts as to whether all the provisions of this charter are in accordance with applicable international law and generally recognized legal principles. But you have put such doubts aside because, as judges, you are bound by the order agreed upon by your four governments . . ."

Exner then described Jodl's attempts to break away from the OKW:

"Requests for resignation were unsuccessful, unless they were desired by the Führer. During the war, he strictly forbade any requests for resignation. So Jodl could not resign. Should he have feigned illness? That, too, is desertion and a crime punishable by death in wartime. Can

one seriously expect a soldier who has grown up in the good old tradition to betray his fatherland, to which he has devoted his entire life, like a coward in times of need, with the result that he can no longer look any new recruits in the face? I don't think so.
So there was only the third option: murder and revolution. In peacetime, this would have meant civil war; in wartime, it would have meant the collapse of the front and the downfall of the empire. So should he have proclaimed: "Fiat justitia, pereat patria!"?
The prosecution seems to take the view that such behavior should have been demanded of the defendant. An astonishing thought! Whether murder and treason can ever be morally justified is a matter for ethicists and theologians to debate. For lawyers, at any rate, such a thing is out of the question. To be obliged, on pain of punishment, to assassinate the head of state? And as a soldier, at that? And in wartime, at that? People who commit such crimes have always been punished, but punishing them for not committing them would be something new to me.
Jodl was not a rebel. His conscience told him that the fatherland was in distress and that every man had to stand at his post. Jodl's post was at the head of the Wehrmacht High Command. He did not get it voluntarily, nor did he keep it voluntarily. He was a tough nut to crack. He fulfilled the task imposed on him by this position to the best of his ability and conscience, to the bitter end . . .
I ask that Colonel General Jodl be acquitted."
8.
Conclusion
"May this duty be replaced in a happier future by an even higher one: the duty to humanity."
Alfred Jodl, closing statement before the International Military Tribunal
We eagerly awaited the press reaction to Exner's closing statement. While the questionable Gaston Oulman was unexpectedly reserved, the criticism in the Süddeutsche Zeitung was gratifyingly positive: "The strongest impression among the closing arguments of the third and final week was probably made by Professor Exner's defense speech for the defendant Jodl," wrote W. E. Süßkind. "The investigations conducted were impressively incisive." And the Times noted: "Certainly the most dignified argument heard from counsel for the defense was made by Professor Exner today, concluding his plea before the Nuremberg Tribunal for the acquittal of General Jodl . . ."
"Now this day is over too," wrote Alfred. "Excellent effect on the court and the defendants . . . Now come the quiet weeks for all of us . . . Much longer than it takes to read, I sat over your two letters earlier, enjoyed them, and dreamed about them. That was a legacy of my youth, and what I had completely forgotten in recent years is now returning. I can often sit quietly for an hour or more and dream after reading a letter or looking at a photograph. But since the basic trait of my character is a cheerful and optimistic one, the content of my dreaming thoughts is also mostly cheerful and joyful, and only rarely do they linger on the dark hours of life, which I have not been spared either. It is very often the case that "do not lament your suffering, you yourself are your suffering."
When I asked him to describe his daily routine, he wrote: "At 6:30 a.m., the guards change shifts, chairs are brought in and placed in front of the cells. The noise wakes me up, I turn over and go back to sleep. Glasses, pencils, fountain pens, and suspenders are placed on the chairs.
The Viennese guard puts the bread on the doorstep. If the guard has a cold, he coughs on it. Shortly afterwards, the client is startled by the cry of 'drinking cup', he rushes out of bed and is given coffee, which he puts down covered, then he takes his glasses, chair and contents, shakes out the blankets, makes the bed, washes his hands and has breakfast, reading and smoking until 7:30. Then the barber comes to shave him. Then he continues his breakfast. At 8 a.m., water is brought in a watering can, then the broom. The client cleans, polishes his boots, brushes his uniform, which has meanwhile been brought from the dressing room on a hanger. When everything is in order, he massages his face, does calisthenics, and only then washes and gets dressed. By now it is 9:15 a.m., and until 9:45 a.m. he reads and smokes a cigarette. In between, he whistles songs. That's a normal morning, and I'm always very happy."

Two days later, his letter was different, lacking focus: "Food is currently very inadequate, little bread. The press writes 'American food' to give the impression that we are getting the same as American soldiers. That is mean. I now weigh 15 pounds less than I did as a lieutenant, and I no longer have the strength to move at anything other than a slow walking pace. That is the reality, which is not meant to be a complaint, but only a defense against hypocrisy."

On July 26, 1946, the prosecutors presented their rebuttals. To everyone's dismay, they hardly addressed the defense's evidence and arguments at all, but instead repeated the previous charges in condensed form, at a level far below that of the defense. Jackson stated:

"Göring's role was half that of a militarist, half that of a gangster. He had his fat fingers in every pie. He used his SA musclemen to bring the gang to power . . . Dönitz promoted the success of the Nazi attacks by instructing his pack of submarines to wage war at sea with the lawless ferocity of the jungle . . . Jodl, the traitor to the tradition of his profession . . ."

And then Jackson stated with astonishing candor: "The Allies are technically still at war with Germany, even though the enemy's political and military institutions have collapsed. As a military tribunal, this court represents the continuation of the Allied war effort." Naturally, this clear political objective, revealed in the replies, left a depressing impression on the defendants. Alfred wrote on a piece of paper in the courtroom:

"All our evidence went unheeded. Don't worry, I already have confidence, patience, and humor. This morning's speech only amused me; not even the 'traitor general' annoyed me, because I found the whole speech to be nothing more than propaganda and fireworks. It was without seriousness, without a sense of justice, without a love of truth, a mixture of hatred and cynicism. The English speech I am listening to now does not seem to be much better. So far, everything is generalized; everyone is responsible for everything. I am responsible for the persecution of the Jews, Streicher for the war . . ."

And the day after:

"I was moved by everything that was supposed to help me get through the days when the buckets are emptied once again, full of inhumanity and barbarism. No one can ignore this dirty content, but the fact that no one wants to recognize the difference between those who wanted this and helped with full knowledge of the content, and those who only learned about it today with shock, amazes me, but it does not shake me. For my emotional barometer always remains the same; it has not fluctuated, whether the prosecution painted everything black or the defense painted everything white. A year ago, I placed my fate in the hands of a higher power, ready to die every day . . . Perhaps I can be of more use to Germany underground than above ground."

All the prosecutors had demanded severe penalties, with the French and Russian prosecutors calling for the death penalty for all the defendants. We tried to continue writing impartially, but Alfred's letter revealed that he felt much the same way I did:

"You know, this situation until the verdict is a hellish one. Everywhere you notice a certain depressed mood, a shy embarrassment, a reluctance to talk about what is on everyone's mind. Only Professor Exner's laughter breaks
like sunshine through the gloomy clouds. I have never whistled as much as I do now. As soon as I get up, I start whistling. The guards, who are on high alert, look surprised, because they are obviously required to report any mental breakdowns. But they don't know me very well. It's not much different from many high-altitude tours ... It has become very clear to me that the ethical principles of my life were formed in mountain camaraderie, that nothing seemed more contemptible to me than the phrase, 'What falls, you should push,' but that my guiding principle could only ever be, 'What falls, you must hold' . . ."

"August 5, 1946. I wrote you a letter yesterday. Forgive me if they are now more serious, but I cannot bring myself to write to you other than how I feel. It would feel like I was lying to you . . . Now that you know what the prosecutors are accusing me of, I would so much like to know whether there is

anything you don't understand, whether you still have any unanswered questions, whether you have any doubts about why I did or could do this or that.
Yesterday, while out walking, a tiny bird chirped as it fluttered around on a bush. I don't walk on the smooth paths like the others, but always around a patch of lawn surrounded by bushes. There used to be a flower bed in the middle, but now it's all destroyed. The guard horde ruined everything; they peel the bark off the lilac bushes with knives. I've never seen people so destructive to nature. But the little bird stayed put and let me stroke it. My eyes filled with tears when I was able to stroke a living creature that didn't hate me for the first time. Soon its mother came and fed it so that it would grow strong, and I had to think of you . . .
My physical condition is good again, my will to live and longing are much too strong. You see how much I still have to say every day... the daily midday view is becoming more intimate and painful... a quiet breath of farewell pervades it."
Both defense attorneys had birthdays this month, and at Alfred's special request, the days were celebrated festively. We held the celebration, which was also attended by Exner's daughter Nora Rohde and Jahrreiss's son, in the basement of the destroyed town hall and sent Alfred a poem.
Professor Exner drank to me, a bright glow on his face, marked by illness and tremendous tension: "You probably know this yourself, without my having to tell you: you have a wonderful husband. Read what he wrote to me today." He read Alfred's lines to the table:
"Dear Professor Exner! That you came, that you stayed, that you devoted all your physical and mental energies to me, whom you have only met once in your life—how can I thank you? Words are too poor for that! How your unshakeable good humor, your hopefulness, and your great knowledge of people and the law have helped me and my wife! Never allow yourself to think that it may have been of no use or insufficient. Whatever the verdict may be, in any case—and this is already a fact today—you have lifted my memory in Germany out of the toxic clouds of slander into a pure, clean atmosphere, broken through to the historical truth, helped the Wehrmacht and large parts of the population regain their self-respect, and become a touching mediator for my wife and me in our time of need...
I believe that everything was and is fate. The age of individualism is over. Humanity will merge into a mechanized collective mass, then regress, destroy a culture that has existed for thousands of years, and then develop a new one over centuries. Perhaps this is a tremendous, inevitable cleansing process of nature to prevent humans from developing further and further intellectually while the natural forces of life wither away and humans degenerate like an overbred flower. For the incessant increase and exaggeration of needs must ultimately lead to degeneration. So today, I feel no guilt other than that fate has placed me in this place and in this time. Whatever I might have done, it would not have changed the course of events in the slightest. May the day come when all Germans understand this . . ."
We were silent. Then I asked the group at the table if I could read another letter that I had received that afternoon:
"August 11. But I wanted to talk to you, my dear, about the anniversary in prison. You know it and live with it, so I will
I will tell you about just one of them, about the battle of thoughts that can only exist in this form during long periods of solitary confinement. Never before did I know that there are so many "selves" in a person that fight each other. It is like a parliament that has 15 or more parties, and you yourself are the chairman with your will. But you are not completely sovereign; the thoughts come of their own accord and begin to speak. You can call them to order and expel them, but they come back. They can torment you so much that tears come to your eyes or even roll down your cheeks. You can close the session and take a break by reading or playing chess, and you can praise the good ones and profess your allegiance to them. If you have no control at all, you become unstable and drift like a ship in a storm without a rudder, or you go under. But that won't happen to me. For example, a tormentor comes and describes in detail the last hour before the execution and the execution itself. "Go away," I say, "I'm not interested." Then another one comes and laughs scornfully: "Are you perhaps afraid to deal with it? Don't you have

to face everything and everyone?" 'Right,' I say, 'but there's still time for that when the time comes.' Already another one is there and says, 'Why are you thinking about yourself at all? Why not just about your poor wife, who has it much harder? You're only losing that little bit of life, but you're leaving her alone in this terrible situation.' "That's true," I have to tell him, "but her fate depends on mine, and that's why mine is the most important thing for now." Then someone from the far right comes along and rants, "What nonsense, everything will be completely different. That's just moral subversion propaganda to make life difficult for the chairman. The court will not pass judgment on a soldier in the same way as it would on a leading Nazi politician who did everything of his own free will that the soldier had to do.' 'No military talk,' says the pacifist, 'one is no better than the other in the eyes of the court, and even if Biddle might have such thoughts, the other three judges do not.' Now I am getting angry and refuse to dwell on these future decisions at all. I want to be calm and happy until the last hour, and whatever happens, I will accept it with ice-cold composure, and any debate about it only harms my own

Attitude. The next day, I gather the boys together and give them a speech. I repeat the sentence I spoke at that memorable wedding and tell them: "This is how it should be, this is how it will be, and this is how I want it to be. And if anyone starts spouting these demagogic ideas again, I will immediately interrupt them with the presidential bell... I will die as happy and proud as I have lived. But now I don't want to hear any more about it!And they have obeyed; since then, there has been peace around me and within me.

Only one person comes now and then and speaks up and says, "You want to see your wife again, when will that be and how will it be, and what will you say to her then and how will you begin, so that all your longing and love does not overwhelm you?4 "Yes," I tell him, "that's still on my mind. But she will help me, she won't make it harder for me than it already is. She will be happy that what I said to her when we parted has come true: 'We'll see each other again.'" (444)

The pleas for the defendants were followed by those for the accused organizations. For the group "General Staff-OKW,"Field Marshals von Manstein, von Rundstedt, and von Brauchitsch were called to the witness stand. Brauchitsch confirmed that resignation was only possible if Hitler himself desired it: "In my case, he was glad to have found a scapegoat for the failure of the Russian campaign." (44)Field Marshal von Manstein conveyed an important insight to the court: "A dictator cannot be forced. The moment he gives in to such coercion even once, his dictatorship is finished." As the entire unfortunate drama of the past was replayed during the field marshal's testimony—Germany's rise like a phoenix from the ashes, the creeping takeover of power by the police state, the Wehrmacht's struggle in this conflict situation—Jahrreiss observed his client. Afterwards, he described the scene to me with emotion: "Your husband is usually the first to stand up when a session ends. This time, I saw him sitting motionless, his hand over his eyes. Only when the guard touched him did he stand up and walk out without looking back.

Soon after, we heard that a commission from the Control Council had arrived. According to the statute, the Control Council was allowed to

mitigate the sentence, but not to make it more severe. I would only learn much later what role the British delegation played in this. There were only a few days left until the end of the trial, and we were both tormented by the worry of whether the daily contact we had had with the defense attorneys could be maintained. Alfred wrote: "We are only allowed to talk in the courtroom, nowhere else. That's why an evening chat with the defense attorneys is such a joy and a relief. It won't be possible very often. Maybe there will still be letters. There is a feeling of finality in the courtroom. I am glad to no longer see the disgusting women's economy. The stenographers work diligently and hard, but I am glad to no longer see the sensationalist wives of the prosecutors congratulating their husbands. I am tired of being stared at by this gawking crowd as if I were in a zoo and being watched through opera glasses. More often than not, I am begged to sign next to the section about me in a propaganda pamphlet, which is a kind of abbreviated indictment. I always write my name and add "All lies" above it. The Americans are

then very proud that I add something. I enjoy that. When I mentioned this at breakfast, Dr. Dix said with a laugh, "Schacht does it even better. He charges a lot of money in cash for every autograph."
In his reply to the "General Staff Group," Colonel Telford Taylor even attacked a leading member of the resistance, Colonel General Ludwig Beck: "Your attitude is nowhere better expressed than in a speech General Beck gave to the War Academy in 1935 . . . We are struggling here with something big and evil. Exposing and dishonoring this group by declaring it a criminal organization is far more important than the fate of the individual in uniform."(64)This sentence gave me hope again for the "individual," as nonsensical as its content was. When, on the last day of the trial, I saw Alfred's figure standing at the skylight across the garden again, I pulled out my handkerchief without a care, despite the guards, and waved and waved and waved.
Half an hour later, at 2:30 p.m. on August 31, 1946, the former Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command, Colonel General Alfred Jodl, made the following statement to the court:
"Mr. President! Gentlemen of the Court! It is my unshakeable belief that future historians will come to an objective and just judgment of the high military
leaders and their assistants. For they, and with them the entire German Wehrmacht, were faced with an impossible task, namely: to wage a war that they did not want, under a commander-in-chief whom they did not trust and in whom they themselves had only limited confidence, using methods that often contradicted their principles of leadership and their traditional, tried-and-tested views, with troops and police forces that were not fully under their command, and with an intelligence service that was partly working for the enemy. And all this in the clear knowledge that the war would decide the fate of their beloved fatherland. They did not serve hell or a criminal, but their people and their fatherland.
As far as I am concerned, I believe that no one can act better than by striving for the highest goals achievable in their situation. That, and nothing else, has always been the guiding principle of my actions. And therefore, whatever verdict you, gentlemen of the court, may pass on me, I will leave the courtroom with my head held high, just as I entered it many months ago. Anyone who calls me a traitor to the honorable tradition of the German army, or who claims that I remained at my post for personal, selfish reasons, I call a traitor to the truth.
In a war such as this, in which hundreds of thousands of women and children were destroyed by carpet bombing and in which partisans used every means at their disposal that they deemed appropriate, harsh measures, even if they appear questionable under international law, are not a crime against morality and conscience. For I believe and profess that duty to the people and the fatherland takes precedence over all others. To fulfill it was an honor and the highest law for me. I am proud of that. May this duty be replaced in a happier future by an even higher one: the duty to humanity."
9.
We will meet again
"A door fell into the lock
I hear your footsteps slowly receding."
Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Past"
Excerpts from the defendants' closing statements were broadcast on the radio, and so I heard Alfred's voice for the first time in months and was pleased by its clear determination. Lieutenant Commander Meckel, Dönitz's co-defense attorney, showed me in the mess hall what he wrote to a friend: "I was most impressed by Jodl. He stood upright, in a rigid posture, but one that seemed completely natural and unforced. His speech was calm and restrained, nothing jarring or metallic, but calm and determined. Only in a few places did his tone and volume rise slightly, for example when he turned his head slightly toward the prosecutors and parried their attacks on his honor with a quick retort. In his demeanor and speech, he was a general in the best sense of the word and probably the most outstanding and irreproachable representative of the German officer who was heard and seen in this courtroom. I have never experienced such a happy combination of idealism and freshness, open-mindedness with a clear-thinking mind and cool, weighing intellect."

Alfred also reflected on this last day in the courtroom before the verdict:
"Now the waiting period has begun ... the journey is over, and my inner excitement continued to reverberate throughout the entire afternoon, so that I often repeated words and sentences from the closing speech to myself. I had no paper with me and was perhaps not entirely calm, and I think I forgot the sentence about 'pride'. Write to me what you thought of
the last words you heard—they were all very different and yet gave a fairly accurate picture of the people who spoke them. I thought Raeder, Schirach, Neurath, and Fritzsche were very good. I covered my ears when Hess spoke, and I also find Frank's remorse hard to bear; the interplay of sin and remorse is too primitive for me. Speer's words were interesting and highly topical."
In addition to Alfred's words, it was actually those of Grand Admiral Dönitz that made the strongest impression on me, because they seemed to hold the key to the past:
"If, despite all idealism, despite all decency and devotion on the part of the vast majority of the German people, the Führer principle has ultimately achieved nothing but misfortune for this people, then this principle must be wrong as such. Wrong because human nature is clearly incapable of using the power of this principle for good without succumbing to the temptations of that power."
There were now days of complete calm until the verdict was reached, and my husband asked me to spend a few days at Lake Chiemsee because of my health:
"It is claimed that the break will last until the 23rd. If that is really the case, you could pack your bags right away and go to Keudells for at least 14 days. Wouldn't that tempt you, distract you, give you strength for the very last time? And the letters I would receive would contain all the magic of Lake Chiemsee and fresh greetings from the island. A defense attorney is here and will pick up and deliver the letters. You give me great joy knowing you are there, where part of my heart is. Do it for my sake . . . Believe me, everything is fine, you really mustn't think that I am suffering from my imprisonment at the moment. I feel quite comfortable, as if I were in a shelter or a trench, even if I can't walk around freely above ground . . . When they get a fitting answer in cross-examination, the prosecutors say, 'I don't want to argue with you.' I don't want to argue with you about who has it harder either. I know that it's you, and that 'the goblins are running down Fürther Straße' was a good, kind thing to say. They run back and forth as soon as they find someone willing to take them in. But they're really gone from me, and I'm starting to believe that it's the same for you."
So on September 3, I traveled south with Professor
Exner, reassured by the thought that my husband was in the most faithful and best hands with Jahrreiss. The change in me at the sight of the beloved Chiemsee landscape was astonishing; it seemed to me as if I myself were stepping out of a prison into freedom. When I felt the fresh sea breeze and my friends lovingly picked me up in Gstadt, I took a deep breath and new hope filled me. But it was only part of me that bathed in the light-flooded landscape, listened to the sound of the monastery bells and the waves lapping against the keel of the boat. Every time I looked at the Kampenwand, Alfred's favorite mountain, my thoughts turned to Nuremberg—the real me was there in that cell. Nevertheless, I let myself fall deep, deep into this dream of freedom, and every day in the gentle peace of this landscape brought healing from fear and anxiety.
Our letters flew like swallows; despite censorship, a letter dated September 4 was already in Alfred's hands on the afternoon of the 5th. As I sat on the beach reading his reply, my hand suddenly felt something hard in the hot sand—I dug out a small tin soldier. Thinking of Andersen's fairy tale about the steadfast tin soldier, I put it in my pocket and continued reading:
"If I am to tell you what sentence I actually expect, I must say openly that I expect anything and everything. My mind simply refuses to commit itself in any way. Perhaps it will be more favorable than we fear in our darkest hours, perhaps it will be worse than we hope in our brightest hours. My bag is ready for any eventuality, I only need to reach for it. And should death stand before my cell, even it will not surprise me. It will find no willing submission and certainly no remorseful contrition, for I will remain conscious that I do not deserve this fate. But I don't want to write you a farewell letter now,

because there is still time for that, and then—and this is a change from last week—I don't want to believe it for your sake. But since no one can know how cruel fate will be to us, even in the event of a longer or even shorter separation, I would like to send you the simple verses by Kayssler from "Dein Weg" (Your Way), which I have grown so fond of:
"There is a door to God the door is small
does it have room for you and me?
Hardly.
Each go confidently on your own.
Over there, as here on earth, we will walk hand in hand again/
But we want, my dearest, to fervently hope that we will still do so here on earth, as we have done throughout this year. Again and again I want to write to you about where you should go and what you should draw . . . In the meantime, we have been informed of the possibility of a visit under 'prison-like conditions'.
The little tin soldier stood on the bench next to me as I rowed home from the island. I tied up the boat, put the oars away in the dry, hot boat room, and walked slowly past fragrant clover fields to Keudells. From the balcony, I saw the old lady waving and started to run. "It was just announced on the radio that the women are allowed to see their husbands in Nuremberg." The voice sounded high and thin from above. We compared our watches and the timetable. With luck, I could still catch the night train. During the train ride, I thought with gratitude how much easier this trip was now than it had been a year ago.
The defense team had already sent a telegram and were happy to find me there early in the morning. As I tied Putzi, the little terrier, to the chair leg at breakfast, a little girl crouched down next to me. "Can I pet him?" With her wide-set eyes under her high forehead and her beautifully curved lips on her little face, could this be Edda Göring? I introduced myself to her mother, who was sitting at the next table. She had already seen her husband twice! Why had I left? I liked her simple, warm-hearted manner.
"We, that is, Mrs. von Neurath, you and I, have the same visiting hour," she explained to me. "You sit opposite each other, separated by a grille, but the guard doesn't interfere. You have an hour."
"We'll see each other again." On September 12 at 2 p.m., what Alfred had assured me on April 22 of the previous year in Berlin came true—without, however, anticipating the circumstances. Professor Jahrreiss accompanied me to the clergyman's room, Father Gerecke offered me cognac, which I gratefully accepted. Then Father Sixtus took me to room 55, where
Mrs. Swabenland greeted me warmly; we knew each other from the first days of the trial. On the way to Alfred's cabin, I passed Göring. Göring stood up and bowed. I saw how his thin, sunken face glowed with joy at seeing his wife and child. We waved to each other as if we had known each other for a long time—what a day!
And then? Silence. A grille in front of me, and behind it, divided into squares, a face. We looked at each other without saying a word, each of us shyly seeing in the other the traces of what this time had etched into their faces like a stylus. And then, forgetting everything else, only the beloved, familiar face. The features in front of me were thinner, the chin more prominent, but the eyes were unchanged. Very bright, very clear, without bitterness, full of kindness, calm, and trust. And the voice—for now it spoke, just like the old one, like the sound of a bell, deep and warm:
"What happened to the things in our apartment?" Now I noticed that next to Alfred, behind the bars, there was a guard who was looking at us curiously. "I heard the Russians burned everything," I said, deliberately somewhat casually, because I knew how much it would hurt him. "Our only possessions are those in the suitcase I took with me to Berchtesgaden. It's now at Lake Chiemsee." I didn't tell him that the silver box had been stolen and how the occupying soldiers had treated the things in the suitcase. After a short pause, he said, "Have you ever thought about the word 'possessions'? It seems to me that in prison you have time to think about many things that you didn't have time for before." I wanted to know if he still had the mascot I had put in his suitcase on April 21. "It's been handed in to

the chamber," he replied, and now he laughed, we both laughed. The Jodls had given me the mascot, "Jodlchen," during my long illness in 1934, and it always went to whoever was in need. "You see," I said, "it's helping you here, too." "There's also the Knight's Cross and the watch," he added. "The Knight's Cross?" I asked in amazement. "Yes, Dönitz awarded it to me in Flensburg. Everything else was stolen from me when I was captured, the golden cigarette case from Mussolini, the beautiful Finnish knife from Mannerheim, and also the lambskin vest." How liberating it was to talk about such trivialities, especially to be able to laugh. I stole a glance
at my watch; the hands were racing, only 20 minutes left. Better not to look. We talked about Fraueninsel. "Is the spire on the old tower still crooked?" I nodded, ten minutes left, better not to look. "Of course, the steamers aren't running, you have to row all the way. Once, a mother swan almost didn't let me land." From next door, we heard Edda reciting a math problem in a bright voice. "I hope you're not expecting me to do a math problem," I said to Alfred. A hand on my shoulder. "Time's up," Father Sixtus warned quietly. We stood up and said at the same time, "See you tomorrow!" What a phrase: See you tomorrow!

That same evening, Alfred wrote:

"This is the first letter since we sat facing each other behind the glass pane. It's like playing the harp, anxiously trying not to touch the deep minor keys that could weigh heavily on our hearts. We want to rejoice and draw new strength from our happy togetherness... That leaves a lot for the letter, but it should not put a damper on our togetherness... We do not want to worry about the problem of who could give more to the other. We have each woven a different part of a tapestry, weaving into it all the love, tenderness, faith, and hope we had within us, and we were so similar, so alike in all our views, that we watched with amazement as it came together more and more, like a prayer rug made by one hand and one spirit. God willing, we will one day kneel on it and renew the daily sacrifice of our love, that we may remain worthy of each other as in those most difficult years of trial in Nuremberg. If not, then you will keep it alone, it will warm you, and from it your prayer will rise to heaven for strength and power to continue to serve in love in my spirit, the German people, and those in need.

What makes me deeply happy is that you have put down roots in my homeland and among the people I know, so that perhaps you will not feel so lost and uprooted after all . . ."

Most of the defendants' relatives had gathered in the hall. Keitel and Papen had refused to see their wives under these circumstances, and Mrs. Raeder had been denied permission to leave the country by the Russian authorities.

The previously businesslike and serious atmosphere of the chapel had changed considerably; the children of Schacht and Ribbentrop were playing around, and most of the women knew each other. I felt particularly drawn to Mrs. Dönitz and Mrs. Speer.

I was delighted to see Winni von Mackensen again, Neurath's daughter, whom I had met in Rome. As we pulled her luggage in a small handcart to her accommodation on the other side of the Pegnitz, we laughed as we remembered her red Mercedes in Rome. Tempi passati! I was deeply saddened to hear that her husband had died in the internment camp.

The German press was now also allowed to enter our fair. We found this annoying, as we felt constantly observed. At the same time, their reporting filled me with growing anger, as the descriptions were often frivolous and devoid of any expertise. There was a story about a journalist from the Eastern Zone who had asked a defense attorney about the correspondence between Goethe and Marx. A few exceptions stood out pleasantly from many of these "storytellers": Ursula v. Kardorff, W. E. Süßkind, H. G. von Studnitz, and others.

I was able to see Alfred every day for the entire following week, always at the same time. Each time, there was the same excitement beforehand, the effort to be calm, cheerful, and not let on about the fear raging inside. I usually wore a dirndl, the traditional costume of his homeland, and again and again I had to tell him about Lake Chiemsee, the island, the Kampenwand mountain, and the friends I had there: the Keudells, the farmer Jell, and his family. The prisoners were now also allowed to visit each

other. Alfred told me who he wanted to see: Dönitz, Neurath, Raeder, and also Göring. Then, like a bolt from the blue, came the news that the verdict had been postponed by a week. The most absurd hopes rose up in me – a lieutenant in the waiting room had cautiously suggested that it might be because of Jodl. "Maybe everything will turn out all right after all," I said to Exner in the evening as we walked home. He nodded, but said nothing.

Alfred wrote: "Sunday was always a quiet day. This time I felt it more, as it was the first day I hadn't seen you. But when the sun shone on the autumn leaves, I was overcome with a longing for the mountains. So I drove across Lake Königssee to the quiet

corner of the Obersee, and climbed up the wall to the Funtensee hut. I don't know why I love it so much, even though there is nothing spectacular about its location. It lies in the Steinernes Meer (Stone Sea) like a deep valley, and no one can come to the hut without being announced by shrill whistles. These are the marmots, "Mankai" in Bavarian, who watch closely everyone who intrudes on these sacred mountains. Even the ascent is so beautiful, with the lake always at your feet, which becomes blacker the higher you climb, and soon looks like a black sheet of ice. When the footbridge leaves the wall and stretches out on a saddle, a small mountain lake lies hidden under mighty beech and fir trees. I have never passed it without swimming in it. It is cold and eerie, and in its clear water you can see right to the bottom, as if into a sunken world. Huge tree trunks and rock debris loom from the depths, between which a fish stands now and then, half hidden in pale vegetation reminiscent of the primeval forest. But this time it was too cold for me, and I contented myself with memories of the summer days I spent here, of the young heart that beat within me then, and found that I had never found the earth so beautiful as on this autumn day, and that I had never known how sad it could be to leave ... It was warm and cozy in the hut; there wasn't much, but I was quite content with bread and a piece of cheese. I can be happy with the simplest things, just not in a back building in a big city, but rather in a wooden hut in the forest...

28. September. "The verdict has been postponed," I reported to Alfred beaming during my next visit. To my great consternation, however, his face was clouded with deep sadness, hardly changing at my words. "We can see each other for a whole week longer now," I tried to comfort him. He just shrugged his shoulders and said I should take care of the unnecessary luggage in good time. "Why unnecessary?" I asked, fighting hard to hold back the tears. I didn't know what to make of this change and found it difficult to sleep.

The next day he was cheerful and calm again. "Forgive my mood," he said, "last night was too terrible. The guard woke me up three times, and then Streicher screamed so horribly." We then talked at length about his

mother, Irma, the Bullion family, and time flew by as if it were a minute and not an hour. But it was a happy hour. I felt grateful that he was so calm today, because I was still under the impression of a scene I had witnessed earlier in the corridor. Mrs. Göring was talking to Professor Jahrreiss about a drawing he had made of her husband. Suddenly, a woman approached from behind, pointed to the sketch, and wordlessly made a hateful gesture across her throat. Edda turned pale, and her eyes widened in shock. Mrs. Göring mastered the situation. "Poor person," she said calmly, "she must be ill." Edda, still frightened, rubbed her eyes. "Your father is waiting for his brave child," I said to her. Graceful and dignified, she walked past the guard and into the cabin to her father.

Three more days, two more, one more. We tried to cover up our tension with irony and a little mockery of the general excitement, but we didn't quite succeed.

"We'll see each other again," said Alfred, as he had once before, at our final farewell.

At home, I found a letter from Colonel General Adam, the former head of the Troop Office and Alfred's patron. "I hope Jodl will be acquitted," he wrote. "He is not a war criminal, but a martyr whom one can only admire for having endured his martyrdom for so long. May your faith in God's justice help you."

10.

The verdict

"If any period of time, with its characters, events, and forms, is to be understood, one must retreat far beyond that period into the past and view the period in question from the beginning, not from the end."
Heimito von Doderer, Tangents, Diary of a Writer 1940-1950

Monday, September 30, 1946—the day of the verdict. Before eight o'clock, I heard the doorbell ring; Professor Exner had come to pick me up. As I hurried down the stairs, the ring on my left hand caught on a nail in the banister. The ring snapped in two, and I heard it hit the stone hallway floor with a loud clang. The sharp ends of the metal had torn a bloody circle around my finger. "Please go ahead," I asked Exner. I looked for the ring and put it in my pocket. It had come from Alfred's mother; I had received it as a wedding gift. On my way to the courthouse, I briefly entered St. Anthony's Church and recoiled. A coffin stood in front of the altar.

The scene in front of the courthouse was reminiscent of the days when the trial began. The building was surrounded, and a steady stream of vehicles rolled up and piled up in front of it. Controls were tightened; at the Fürther Straße crossing alone, I was asked for my ID three times. I noticed the indifference of the population, who took virtually no notice. Was this an expression of the mood or a renewed unquestioning acceptance of power?

The defense attorneys were in the courthouse today, so I stayed in the mess hall for the time being. After walking around the courthouse, I crossed the Pegnitz Bridge to Neuraths, who had asked me to spend the next few hours with them. The homeowners lent us their radio, and we sat and waited.

"On August 8, 1945, the governments of the United
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Government of the United States of America, the Provisional Government of the French Republic, and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics agreed to establish this Court for the purpose of judging those war criminals whose crimes have no geographically determinable scene of action."

This was followed by a list of the countries that had acceded to the agreement, details of the statute, and statistical data. I noted: 403 public sessions, 33 witnesses for the prosecution, 61 witnesses and 143 questionnaires for the defense. The court, it was explained, had granted all requests that it considered relevant to the defense.

Alternately, beginning with Lord Justice Lawrence, the judges read out the judgment, starting with the events since 1919. The Treaty of Versailles was mentioned, but only insofar as Hitler had broken it. The subsequent presentation showed that the judges had largely agreed with the position of the prosecutors: When citing the "key documents," the three versions of Hitler's speech of August 22, 1939, were mentioned, which General Admiral Boehm had refuted in an affidavit; the secret clause of the German-Russian Friendship and Border Treaty was tacitly ignored, thereby approving the partition of Poland; the German landing in Norway was recognized as a "preventive war in a foreign country in the face of overwhelming necessity for self-defense," but the British landing plans in Norway were not considered such a necessity; the Balkan campaign—triggered ad hoc by the coup in Yugoslavia and throwing all calculations for the Russian campaign into disarray—was even described as a "war of aggression that had been contemplated for a long time, certainly since August 1939."

I had taken notes mechanically. However, my thoughts still raced back to the torn ring, which seemed to me like a bad omen, the coffin in the church, and beyond—until they receded before the wall that horror had mercifully erected. During my lunch break, I sought out the place from which I had seen Alfred every day. The windows were wide open, a black rectangle yawning where he had usually stood.

Later, I learned from Alfred's notes that the defendants had eaten in the basement today:

"Lunch in the basement was like soldiers together in a bunker. Somehow I felt connected to the men I had rejected in freedom, few of whom could have been my friends. Now we were all just Germans. Seyß-Inquart, with his refined smile that did not fail him even at this hour, sat next to me. And we talked about the war that would most likely have consumed us if we had not been in leading positions. But the Führer has more to accomplish and more to endure than his soldiers . . ."

At 2:15 p.m., the reading of the verdict resumed, this time by Judge Francis Biddle. Now every word was important; now came the legal justifications. "The Charter is not an arbitrary exercise of power by the victorious nations, but is, as will be shown, in the opinion of the Court, the expression of international law existing at the time of its establishment." Regarding the legal principle of "nullum crimen sine lege, nulla poena sine lege," it was explained: "The defendants must have known that they were acting contrary to all international law when they deliberately carried out their intentions of invasion and attack."

On the question of the individual's responsibility under international law, the judge stated: "It is precisely the essence of the Charter that individuals have international obligations that go beyond the national duties of obedience imposed on them by a single state. . . The fact that their task was assigned to them by a dictator does not absolve them of responsibility for their actions." The original charge of "conspiracy" had been dropped. It occurred to me that this was actually wrong. Shouldn't the murder of the Jews, the crime of genocide, be regarded as a kind of "conspiracy" by a certain circle?

The court then announced its verdict against the accused "organizations": the SA, the Reich government, and the General Staff were acquitted, the latter with the exception of a few of its members. The following were convicted of criminal acts: the corps of political leaders, the Gestapo, the SD, and the SS.

I noticed how the officers were again accused more severely than even the SS and SD, let alone the Reich government and the Foreign Office:

"They are a disgrace to the honorable military profession.

The truth is that you actively participated in these crimes or remained silent when crimes were committed before your eyes, crimes greater and more outrageous than the world had ever had the misfortune to see. This had to be said."

"And the crimes on your side?" I thought. The liquidation of 15,000 Polish officers in Katyn, the expulsion of around 13 million people from the East, the "splendid decision" of May 11, 1940, to carry out "strategic bombing" – Hamburg, Dresden? And finally Hiroshima? Tu quoque – forbidden!

The monotonous voice on the radio announced that the second part of the verdict—the verdict on the individual defendants—would be read out tomorrow. We were aware that the acquittal of the Reich government and the General Staff—as gratifying as it was—would inevitably lead to the conviction of Neurath and Jodl. Only the severity of the punishment was still uncertain.

"I will try," wrote Alfred, "to write this letter in sections. What you wrote yesterday was a balm after a hard day. It cannot stand up to history, but could one expect anything else in this regard? I am not disappointed, in some respects even satisfied. What was said today does not convince those in the know, because they know better. The trial could never be anything other than political. As for the general presentation of events, to what extent it does justice to the individual in legal and human terms, we will hear tomorrow.

The decision on the group of senior leaders was a joy. Perhaps I was also able to contribute something, and it is a gratifying feeling that, even if I fought in vain for myself, I was able to help my comrades. Whatever tomorrow may bring, don't let it knock you down. The harder the blow, the prouder you should be. The day will come when the world outside will think differently, and for that day you will live with indestructible love for Germany and for one of its officers, whom you knew better than anyone else."

A sleepless night. As I walked past the Palace of Justice in the bright autumn sun, I remembered how I had stood here a year ago in the pouring rain, with a dark premonition of how this would end. Should I listen to what I already knew? To know this, and then to endure

as the sun bathed the dewy meadows in its splendor, as if it wanted to reveal the beauty of this world to us once more! I had to think of Alfred's letter . . . that he had never loved the world, life, as much as he did now . . .

Kites stood in the sky, colorful spots in silky blue. I heard children cheering as a kite rose steadily higher and higher, then a gust of wind caught it, it staggered back and forth and fell to the ground. I felt tears running down my face.
Mrs. v. Mackensen opened the door for me, and I saw that she and her mother had slept as little as I had. We turned on the radio:
"The court will now explain the reasons that led to the verdicts of guilt or innocence..."
First, the first bench: Göring and Keitel—guilty on all four counts . . . Then the second row: Dönitz—guilty on counts 2 and 3; Raeder—guilty on counts 1, 2, and 3.
And now Jodl: "Although the defendant Keitel was his immediate superior, he reported on operational matters directly to Hitler. In a strictly military sense, Jodl was responsible for the actual planning of the war, and he was largely responsible for the strategy and direction of operations. Jodl defended himself by saying that he was a soldier sworn to obedience and not a politician, and that his staff and planning work left him no time for other matters. He testified that he acted on Hitler's behalf in signing and initialing orders, memoranda, and letters, often in Keitel's absence.
Although he claimed that as a soldier he had to obey Hitler, he testified that he had frequently attempted to prevent certain measures by delaying them, which he occasionally succeeded in doing, such as when he opposed Hitler's demand that he issue orders for Allied terror pilots to be lynched . . ."
This was followed by a list of the individual "crimes": crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. And then the verdict:
"The court has found Jodl guilty on all four counts."
Acquittal for Papen, and then von Neurath: guilty on all four counts.
Lunch break; the sentences were to be announced shortly thereafter. I paced back and forth behind the prison; the kites were still in the sky, the autumn sun was setting. 2:50 p.m.: Lord Justice Lawrence read out the sentences. Each defendant was called individually: Göring—death by hanging . . . Hess—life imprisonment . . . Von Ribbentrop—death by hanging . . . Keitel—death by hanging. Death by hanging for an officer? For a soldier? The other names slipped past me, now came the second row: Dönitz – 10 years in prison. Weren't the admirals named on the betting list before my husband? . . . Raeder – life imprisonment . . .
So the two admirals remained alive—that was all that mattered!
Jodl—in accordance with the points of the indictment on which you were found guilty, the International Court of Justice sentences you to death by hanging.
As if from far away, I heard the names Speer, von Neurath – 15 years in prison.
"Now we will never live together again," sobbed the old lady. "But he is alive and will be released," Winni Mackensen consoled her.
The door opened and Jahrreiss stood on the threshold. The shock on his face made the inconceivable a certainty. It took a while for my mind to grasp what he said by way of consolation: according to Article 26 of the Statute, the Control Council could mitigate the sentence. "But my husband refused to ask for clemency!" "On his part, yes," said Jahrreiss, "but he gives you free rein!"
The next morning, the professors returned very quietly from their meeting with Alfred. Jahrreiss handed me a letter:
"At first, I didn't want to write to you today, but tomorrow instead, but now I feel the need to hug you and comfort you, because now there is only one concern for me, and that is you. Let's not talk about me anymore. Don't fill my foolish heart with hope anymore, just let it settle down. I felt my heart a little on the way home from the courtroom and then in my cell when I lay down on the bed and read Banse's 'Book of the Orient'. But now it's almost completely calm again, only my appetite isn't very big. Our Dr. Pflücker came right away to help, but
I had a longing to be alone. He said I was a Roman. But I had to tell him that I couldn't control myself as well as they could. I have too much spirit and too much heart for that, and unfortunately it is inclined

to break out and set off on a journey through Denisstraße and then through all the places in Germany where people are remembering me and you today.
I opened Frank Thieß, the book that has given me more this year than any other book in my life, and reread the passage from the introduction that is like gospel to me: "The forces of history are as cruel as those of a jungle, but they serve the ultimate purpose of all existence—fertility. Again and again, the earth is torn open so that the seeds of a new spirit may fall into the bloody furrow. The plow passes over hundreds of thousands who die innocently, but their death loosens what has become solid, the clods break open, and death can no longer be distinguished from the new life that is already stretching its flickering flame out of the grave."
But I could have spared you a lot of heartache if fate had overtaken me on July 20. Now I can only hope that the world will at least treat your pain with reverence and that you will not be made to pay for what is my task alone to sacrifice.
Now you want to know about my mountain trips. It will be difficult for me to give you the date, but what brings you joy is also a joy for me and distracts me before I have to "make the ultimate sacrifice for the great love of my homeland," which is a truly beautiful interpretation you have given to this judgment. I am reminded of Irma's last letter, in which she wrote at the end: "I will continue to write as long as I can think of something to say, and so this letter will never end . . ." I, too, would like to continue writing on and on . . .
I would be happy if you had someone who was always with you, who spoke to you at night when you couldn't sleep, and who gave you all the love I am thinking of now, as the bells of our church ring in my cell. Oh, my dear, why is fate so hard on you!"
The defense attorneys were now sitting in the chapel again, and I had to force myself to go with them. But the presence of these friends, the sympathy shown to me from all sides, and the unanimous rejection of the verdict did me good. Rumors were circulating
that the convicted would be taken to Berlin. It was necessary to act as quickly as possible to submit petitions for clemency, which Alfred had left up to me, to the appropriate authorities. When I heard that high-ranking British and American officers had left the courtroom in protest before the verdict was read, there was no doubt in my mind: only the soldiers of the victorious powers could do anything for Jodl. Hadn't the commander-in-chief of the US Navy, Admiral Nimitz, saved Dönitz's life with his statement on unrestricted submarine warfare? But I was not only concerned about Alfred's life. I also wanted future generations to see him and the soldiers in a different light than some of the other defendants and political representatives of the Third Reich.
Dr. Dix told me that the British delegation would be leaving Nuremberg on October 3. So it was high time. In agreement with the defense attorneys, I drafted the following letter:
"To the Chief of the General Staff of the Royal British Army, Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery.
Sir! Until today, I had hoped that the International Military Tribunal would take into account the fact that my husband, Colonel General Alfred Jodl, as Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command, i.e., a purely military authority with no command authority of its own, had to fulfill his military duty. This hope has not been fulfilled, and the death penalty by hanging has been pronounced. This is the first time in history that the chief of a general staff has been treated as a common criminal for planning operations.
When the unconditional surrender was signed in Reims, my husband was treated by the Allied delegations in accordance with his rank. The tribunal has decided that the instrument of surrender in Reims constitutes the legal basis for relations between the Allies and Germany. I cannot imagine that a document of such fundamental importance could have been signed by a 'criminal'.
As Chief of the General Staff of the Royal British Army, may I ask you to intercede with the Control Council, which is authorized under Article 26 of the Charter to reduce the sentence, to have the sentence reduced. I ask this of you as the wife of a soldier . . ."

I hurried with this letter to the Grand Hotel, where all the members of the court were staying. It was brightly lit, and a farewell dinner was being held for the delegations. The old porter, who had often helped me in the past to obtain foreign newspapers, let me in. I asked a gentleman in civilian clothes if I could speak to a member of the British delegation. Through the glass door, I saw waiters in tailcoats serving champagne on silver trays, I heard the clinking of glasses and women laughing. They were celebrating the end of the trial, the verdict. More waiters hurried past, and a beautiful young woman in a grand evening gown came down the stairs. She didn't know, and I myself hardly knew, that at that moment I saw a noose around her neck. It was probably better for me to wait outside. Suddenly, a British captain stood in front of me, young, dark, with a narrow, intelligent face. "What can I do for you, ma'am?" I asked him to take my letter to England and forward it to Montgomery. "I shall fight this verdict to the last," I added. "We are all of your opinion, ma'am," said the young officer seriously, "I am glad to be of help to you." He asked to consult briefly with his superior and returned with the news that the British chief prosecutor, Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe, himself would take the letter. "Tell your mother that your behavior has restored my faith in British fairness," I thanked him. His handshake was firm and warm. When I turned around, Jahrreiss was standing next to me.

The prisoner wrote: "The first day after the verdict was announced was an unmistakable indication of the path I would have to take . . . I think I was quite calm when I took off the headphones. There was only one thing I noticed in the large hall: the two purple robes and the eyes of the two men, which were fixed on me with a deep, loving sadness.

My heart is still clenched, as it always is when something hurts bitterly—it was like that when Irma left us, and it was like that recently in Reims when I had to sign the death sentence for Germany. I will not deny that the pain and indignation still stir within me at the injustice of this world. Perhaps a righteous man must fall so that his grave may become the cradle of a new human right. Perhaps his sacrifice will save the lives of many others. Perhaps he will even help other generations to enjoy a long period of peace,

while our lives have known almost nothing but war and revolution. Such a sacrifice can only be made by a person who, in his national idealism, embodied a world order that is now to be replaced by another. If that is the case, then my death has meaning. May the many young widows and the children they are raising grow into a happy future that also transfigures your old age in the awareness that they have sprung from our sacrifice. That is the one thing my thoughts revolve around, but I am becoming more and more at peace. The other is much harder, it is my pain for you, and it is boundless, as boundless as my love. Not the selfish pain of losing you, but the pain that springs from helplessness, from no longer being able to help you.

You understood me, my dear, when we spoke only of happy things during our last meeting. That is no longer possible, and yet we want to try. If I can say little about you to the professors, you will understand, and they also know that it affects me too deeply and is beyond my self-control.

Since the verdict, representatives of the press had repeatedly tried to speak to me, but Mrs. Pöhlmann had turned them away at my request. One man, however, would not be put off. "I fought against the Germans in the Czech Legion, but this verdict against a soldier has outraged me. Please dispose of me as you see fit; I will pay for your cables abroad." I recognized the opportunity and gratefully accepted his help. I no longer remember his name, but I am grateful to him! I now sent a series of cables to leading figures of the victorious powers: Churchill, Eisenhower, Stalin, Bedell Smith, Juin, Wedemeyer. The cable to Churchill read:

"Sir! You have always been proud to be a soldier. You were the mast on which England flew its flag in mortal danger. As the daughter of a mother who came from England, I would like to ask you to use your influence as a soldier to save the life of my husband, Colonel General Jodl, who, like yourself, fought for his country to the very end."

Two days later, I found a small envelope in my mailbox on Denisstraße with the inscription: On His Majesty's Service. I tore it open and read:

"I have received your letter and forwarded it to the Prime Minister. Winston Churchill."
Was there still hope? The professors had also submitted a petition for clemency to the Control Council. In addition to pointing out nine factual errors in the verdict, it stated: "Jodl never initiated any action that he recognized as contrary to international law; he resisted all orders that he considered questionable under international law and ultimately bowed only to the bitter compulsion imposed on him by indispensable military discipline." Attached as an appendix was the study by London-based international law expert Professor Smith on the so-called "protection of superior orders."
It was not until years later that I learned what had taken place within the Control Council: in the advance copy of the memoirs of British Air Marshal Sholto Douglas, England's representative on the Control Council, it was written with astonishing candor that the then Prime Minister Bevin had prohibited any interference in this "political judgment." The Air Marshal also wrote that he, together with the Russian delegate, had prevented a reduction in the sentence, as advocated by American General McNarney and French General Koenig. Douglas stated that the reason for this was that Jodl had been jointly responsible for the shooting of the English airmen after their escape from the English prisoner-of-war camp in Sagan. This was an inaccurate claim, but my repeated attempts to refute it in the British press were rejected. It was only the British historian David Irving who succeeded in responding to Douglas. In the memoirs, which were later published as a book, this passage, which appeared in the advance copy, is no longer included.
The prisoner wrote:
"It seems that we will not be taken to another place, but that my life will come to an end here. That is a beautiful final gift. Over the years, the cell has become a piece of home for me; I have kept it so clean and tidy that even my mother would praise me. If the walls of this cell could read minds, they would know more about me than any human being, for from my earliest youth to the present day, there is hardly any experience that has not been revived in my memory during these long months. Surely the walls have pricked up their ears, for until now they have only listened to young people who did not have much to say and only regretted their stupidity. But not the life of a man
whose life was dominated by the never-ending hardship of the country through two wars and two women . . ."
I heard from Dr. Laternser that petitions for clemency had been written by officers interned in various camps—only for Jodl. He gave Professor Exner one of them: "In Camp Munsterlager, German generals, admirals, and former aides to the supreme command appeal to your military understanding with the request to intercede with the Allied Control Council for a reduction in the punishment of Colonel General Jodl.
In his belief that, as a soldier, he was bound to unconditional obedience to his supreme commander, and as a general staff officer, he was further bound by special service instructions to carry out orders given, Colonel General Jodl, in our opinion, always tried to keep the conduct of the war, as far as he had any influence, within the chivalrous bounds of German military tradition. To our knowledge, he never acted out of dishonorable motives. We therefore believe that Colonel General Jodl deserves a reduction in the dishonorable punishment intended for him.
On behalf of 150 officers, signed Vierow, General of the Infantry."
Father Zwack, the head of the Catholic Mission in Königstraße, who had helped me forward the cable to General Eisenhower, sent a messenger to ask me to come to him. When I entered his room breathlessly, he first handed me a bag of coffee: "To keep you going." Then he held up a telegram: "Here is the answer from Eisenhower."
I read: "All testimony given before the court will certainly be taken into consideration by the Control Council when it deals with your husband's case. I know far too little about the case to be able to intervene as you wish. Nevertheless, I will forward your request to the Control Council. Dwight Eisenhower."

As with Churchill, this was not an offer of help, but I clung to the hope that the voices of these personalities might have an effect.
The prisoner wrote:
"October 3, 1946. At first, I was not in favor of the petition for clemency,
but when Exner read the reasons to me again today, I realized that I owe it to you and to my name to document what is false and incorrect in the reasoning. For they may do with me as they please, but I still want you to see that my name is spoken with reverence in Germany, for which alone I died, not for fame or wealth, party or power. Last night, for the first time in prison, I took a sleeping pill; it had the effect of an anesthetic. I don't want to do this all the time, only in exceptional cases, because it seems to me like an unmanly escape into a dream world, like the one opium creates. I feel like I have regained control of my thoughts. The long morning conversation with my friends was also much easier than yesterday, when Exner said so touchingly, "We should be ashamed to come to you." And yet I should be ashamed of having put these two men in such a situation. I spent the whole morning chatting with them, first with Exner about my past life. He is a philosopher, and his thoughts are no longer entirely in this world. I was deeply moved by Jahrreiss's loving care for you. We also talked about the death of the Redeemer and about the battle you are fighting for me out there, in which I only want to be an uninvolved object. But I understand him and I bless him for you, because love is nothing more than a continuous struggle not to lose or have to leave the most beloved thing in the world . . . But whatever happens, you yourself said first that we are never able to fathom the meaning of an event that seems undeserved, unjust, or incomprehensible until many years later, when enlightenment comes. Your pain will also subside, you will smile again and be able to enjoy your youth. You will remember more and more the proud and happy moments in our life, and when the dawn of a happier and more peaceful time shines in the firmament once again, the hatred will have disappeared. You are quite right, this year has replaced a lifetime and has brought us closer together than a hundred years could have done . . .
I was a little sad that they told you about the handcuffs, but believe me, these things don't hurt anymore. I don't feel like I'm the one who's bound, but always the one who's in charge
leader, physically and mentally, to the escort. This afternoon I had to laugh to myself as I carefully massaged myself after shaving. But I want to look fresh and fit not only in front of our friends, but until the very last minute. There is no fallen poor sinner here, but a soldier who is calmer and more serene than his pursuers.
Tomorrow, the last day with my friends, will not be easy for me. What I may not be able to tell them, you must add: that I could not have wished for anyone dearer or better than these two men. May they forgive me for robbing them of a year of their lives. The harvest will one day be reaped from what they have sown, and you and the German people will live off it . . ."
The next day, Professor Kraus brought me a letter that a French woman had given him. With a heavy heart, I read:
"Madame: I do not know when you will read this letter, in the midst of the grief that overwhelms you, coming from a stranger. It may seem like an insult to you, but I owe it to my conscience as a Frenchwoman to come and tell you that, for me, General Jodl was a true soldier who fought for his country like all soldiers throughout history . . . Part of my family perished in the concentration camps . . . that is to say, I am well aware of the horrors of war, but suffering is worthless; it breeds hatred . . . I ask you to believe in my deep and painful sympathy . . . Anne Marie De P., from a French officer's family."
Still deeply affected by this letter from a stranger on the other side, I agreed to give an interview to a British correspondent. I asked him to publish the following statement:
"I have appealed to the soldiers of all four great powers to stand up for the life of my husband, Colonel General Jodl. I am fighting to make the world realize, before it is too late, that this verdict is a humiliation for all true soldiers, that it is a terrible injustice to punish an honorable soldier with death by hanging because he placed the fulfillment of his military duty and love for his country above all

else. It is so bitter to know that this realization will probably come too late. Anyone who wants to hear a fair judgment about my husband should ask the German people
. I have no doubt what the answer would be . . ."
The press representative, in uniform with a beret and the press badge on his upper arm, looked at me with pity. "Well, I can understand you, but I fear you can't stop the machine."
"That's just it!" I exclaimed. "You accuse us of not having resisted, and now you see how it is: orders from the government, and no way to change it, even though you know it's wrong." He shrugged and left. "You can't stop the machine."
11.
The Cross
"You should believe and confess that I fought for Germany and not for its politicians."
Alfred Jodl, Nuremberg, October 15, 1946
The prisoner wrote:
"Today was a particularly difficult day, as I had to say goodbye to the two men who, as friends and comrades, fought with me throughout this entire year for my rights, for the honor of German soldiers, and ultimately for all decent Germans, with spirit, fearlessness, and all their hearts. We could not have found better lawyers or nobler men... In ten years, you will see what we owe to the work of these men and their reputation, who know me so thoroughly. You must thank them, because this main duty of this last day was neglected, because a hot stream always shot from my heart into my eyes and paralyzed my speech. Please tell them both, but they felt the same way. We had simply grown fond of each other, and 'an easily moved heart is a miserable thing on this unstable earth'. Neither of them will allow untrue legends to arise about me, and both will always be there when you need help. You have two more true friends in life, and perhaps one or two thoughtful people among the victorious powers will reflect on the fact that this is a rather strange result of a year of intensive contact with a 'criminal'. Streicher and Jodl, that's the same thing today. Whether you kill the legal head of state or obey him, it makes no difference; in both cases you will be hanged, and when a defense attorney asks what I should have done, there is silence throughout the courtroom. Forgive me, my dear,
there's no point in becoming cynical, I'm only hurting you. But if there's no one left to tell, it makes me feel better to write it down. You see, I'm writing everything down to get it off my chest, and you should do the same. I'll comfort you, it gets better every day.
Meckel, the young submarine man, stood upright in front of me today as if giving an official report and said, 'I'll take you out to see all your comrades.' So today I made a request to see you one more time, as late as possible. Then we'll have a long time to look forward to it, and maybe we'll be able to control the situation. It's just like every letter from you—I experience joy and pain in such depth that no god and no gathering of willpower beforehand can help . . ."
And he wrote:
"6. 10. 46, Sunday evening. Your letter arrived this morning, and it pained me that it had been written at six o'clock in the morning, proof that heavy thoughts assail you early in the morning and give you no rest, while I was still dozing blissfully in a sweet dreamland at half past seven this morning. I saved your letter until everything was clean and tidy, our doctor had made his rounds, and the organ in the church next door began to send its warm, soft tones to me; then, as I began to read slowly, absorbing every word, the first ray of sunshine pierced through the thick curtain of clouds. Now, at dusk, I have read the letter over and over again, and now I want to reply. I don't know if I will find the time and energy to write about my mountain trips, but they were probably the expression of my greatest joy and vitality. You mustn't think that I sit around staring blankly for even a minute; I am busy from early morning until late at night, and when I am not reading or playing chess or sleeping, I am writing.
You know that I have already written the request for our meeting. If we put everything that relates to the harsh present at the end or the beginning, then we will give ourselves another 45 sacred minutes,

which will accompany me for a few more days, but you for a long life, like a gift. Good night, I feel your night watch . . ."
And he wrote:
"Monday evening. Father Sixtus came, brought me your greetings, and said that we would see each other on Saturday at ten o'clock, when the mail was delivered. The whole table is full, as if it were my birthday. Out of the happiness of this love, I want to answer you. If the mail, which makes me infinitely happy, continues like this, I will have to write you a farewell and thank you for everything, so that you can forward it. I feel three things: deep, angry indignation at the injustice done to a soldier, heartbreaking pain for my wife, and unbridled pride that I have been chosen to represent German soldiery. Alongside this, I feel complete indifference toward death, perhaps even a longing for Irmelein. The latter, my dear, is not a departure from you, but a journey toward eternal peace. But you still keep me so strongly alive with your letters that I truly and sincerely look forward to each new day because it brings your letters.
I feel much the same way about the help you have received from members of the victorious powers: it softens my hard feelings and makes me particularly happy. Eisenhower is right: "They have made it easy for themselves with the soldiers. First they are presented with the war, and then the bill. It's a good thing I don't have to be a soldier again, because no politician would enjoy me anymore. I would bring back the age of the condottieri. I didn't know anything about the petitions from the officers' camps; this news made me particularly proud and happy. Tell Dr. Laterner how pleased I am about these steps taken by my comrades.
The fact that the same people who voluntarily worked overtime two years ago are now on strike in Berlin shows just how much politics and mass leadership, public opinion, and political freedom are golden rungs on the ladder to true human ethics. What a royal character every predator is compared to humans; it always remains the same, it does what it must, as God created it. But such thoughts lead too far. You, too, must now remain the same and must not destroy yourself inwardly and outwardly in your pain. I am really getting better every day, and in every letter something of this should overflow onto you . . ."
And he wrote:
"Isn't it a shame? I have slept deeply and refreshingly the last few nights without any medication. That is the insensitive, stubborn criminal soul, psychologists will say, who believe they can dissect the human soul with their science. What do these surgeons and diagnosticians of the psyche know about my inner life? No more than any fly on the wall. I slept well because I am emotionally tired, because I have strong nerves, and because I have come to terms with a fate whose final act in life has never filled me with terror. My life is short, but yours is long. However, no one can take away the pain I feel for you.
I have always possessed the humility that I need now. Not the kind that is always bowed down and inactive, waiting for the workings and rulings of divine fate; that was not my way. But if the person who is humble is tolerant because he himself needs tolerance, who drew no dividing lines between people, who was always inclined to see the fellow human being in other people, then I have been humble, as was also the basic trait of my parents. But I also inherited from them a hardness and combativeness against all injustice, and it is these two qualities on which my mental balance rests today. I am not broken and I am not desperate. I love every day for the sake of the love that comes from you, and I will also love life until the last minute, because I still stand firmly and sturdily in it with both feet. But enough about me now, it looks as if I am the main character in this tragedy. I am sure that our friends will stand by you, and that is the greatest comfort. I understand that you want to be alone on your final journey, but don't underestimate the gravity of the last moment. You live so close by that you might hear the gates slam shut, and I would like someone to put their arm around you.
Back in Berlin on April 21, I thought I could take you with me myself. I knew it would be a fight to the last, but I believed it would be at the Berghof and that the final battle would take place at Kehlenstein,

which Francois Poncet so aptly christened the Grail Castle. I then thought that you would be with me in the tunnels of the Obersalzberg and that I would meet my death in this final battle in my homeland and in the presence of my mountains, with my head in your lap. That's
beautiful and so easy I had imagined it to be. But what is to have lasting value in this world is never easy. Something much more difficult was in store for us, but in a different form it is still the same, even something higher.
I was able to say the sentence: "It's not about me, my person plays no role in this process." This sentence must not be discredited, for I am deadly serious about it, and it was willingly taken up and the "group" acquitted, and I was sacrificed as the embodiment of German militarism. . . . The bells are ringing and greeting you . . ."
And he wrote:
"Come, my dear, let me comfort you and calm you down and tell you about it. Look, I sleep blissfully every night like a child without any medication; the doctor is just my companion; the peace and quiet and comfort of breakfast reign every day, not just on Sundays. I'm never ready before ten o'clock. By the time I've marched up and down the hall for ten minutes, made my notes, and looked at the pictures, it's already time for lunch. The food is good and plentiful as never before. After lunch, I lie down on my bed and read, and after half an hour I'm fast asleep. Time just flies by, and even if I wanted to brood, I wouldn't have time for it. Tomorrow I will send a joint thank you to my comrades, but there is not enough time for that, as it should belong to you alone. Professor Adam's book may not mean much to you. My ideas about the world do not see the earth and therefore also human beings as the center of all existence; in this respect I am more humble than the theologians. Pray, believe, and remain as you have been until now. I would be mortified if, in my time of need, my religious beliefs were different from those I held in times of happiness. I know the poem by Flex that you mention. Don't worry, all hours are difficult, the most difficult on Saturday, but all are good, and the last will be the best."
Alfred's only real friend, the general of the mountain troops Rudolf Konrad, had sent him a poem by Weinheber in prison. Alfred copied it down for me:
"And even if the yoke of necessity threatens to crush naked humanity, double, gods, with deep distress the deep dignity of this heroism . . .
The dead god suddenly opened his eyes, his gaze piercing the man's heart. "I created you to be a vessel for every torment." (4)
The man, pausing on his path through horror and pain, was startled, stood rigid and narrow, and resumed his course of torment.
See you on Saturday, no one sees us, no one hears us, no one can separate us."
On October 10, 1946, the prisoner wrote to his comrades:
"My dear friends and comrades! During the months of the Nuremberg trials, I testified for Germany, for its soldiers, and for history. The dead and the living gathered around me, and their help gave me strength and power. The verdict of this court was against me. That does not surprise me. But the words I received from you were the true verdict for me. Never in my life have I been proud, but today I can, may, and will be. I thank you for that, and Germany will in turn thank you for not cowardly abandoning one of its most loyal sons in times of need and death. Neither timidity nor hatred should determine your future lives; you should think of me with reverence and pride, just as you should think of all the soldiers who fell on the battlefields of this cruel war, as the law commanded. They were sacrificed for a more powerful Germany, but you should believe that they died for a better one. You should hold on to that and work for it."
And he wrote to me on the same day:
"Thursday. It is noon, and the autumn sun is shining brightly and cheerfully into the cell, which seems to me a favorable condition to begin the letter to you now, because it will then contain more light and sunshine than if it were written in the shadow of the evening. Tomorrow is your mother's birthday. I think of her; I was looking forward to having a mother again in her. Today you know that her death was

a blessing. She died in the hope that we would both find a happy life together. This verdict would have broken her heart. Everything has a meaning; we don't recognize it immediately, but if we are of good will, we will understand it later.
In the meantime, the mail has brought its blessings, its cornucopia,
and there is still much to tell. Rudi writes about the inscription in a castle belonging to Prince Vorontsov in Crimea: "There is no victor except God." That could really be written at the beginning of all history books for young people. You also write about your time in Vienna. Can anyone imagine what it would be like today if the war had not come? Would we have been happier? Certainly, but would we know it? We would never have been able to grow together as we have now . . .
It just occurred to me that you will receive this letter after we last saw each other, and that it is not prepared for that. But perhaps this unpretentious chatter will do you good. One cannot constantly worship one's pain and fate on the altar of heroism. In the meantime, let us also chat, laugh, and rant; that too is part of our lives, and so it should be until the end . . ."
At noon on October 11, Professor Exner entered my room on Denisstraße at an unusual time. He walked even more stooped than usual, and his face showed deep exhaustion. At first, I suspected that his condition had worsened and asked if he was in severe pain. He shook his head. He lit his pipe, his hand trembling. Suddenly, I understood everything. "Did the Control Council reject it?" He nodded silently. "Does Alfred know?" He shrugged his shoulders. After a while, he left, saying he needed to lie down. "Jahrreiss will come to see you shortly."
So this is how it will be: the man I love, whom I love so dearly, will be killed, killed by other people, deliberately, he will be hanged. Hanged in the name of a law that was created for this trial, and only for this trial. Certainly, having served in a leading position in a regime that itself killed in the most cruel and cynical manner, that wanted to systematically exterminate a race, was a very serious charge. But Jodl had served as a soldier, not the system; the murders took place without his knowledge. Could he have prevented them? No!
But was an earthly court still important now? I felt all standards beginning to shift. It was as if we were both being led into a hall of enormous proportions, where we stood trembling and helpless. A glimmer of light penetrated through the crack of a door that was still closed. Its brightness was both terrifying and overwhelming in its brilliance. Soon
Alfred would stand before a judge who knew more about him than he knew himself.
The prisoner wrote:
"10/11/46. When you receive this letter, we will have said goodbye to each other forever. I don't know if you will tell me, but you know it as well as I do, because this afternoon Dr. Gilbert told me that the Control Council had rejected all appeals. Perhaps he wanted to do me a favor, perhaps he was expecting a special psychological treat. Be that as it may, I am glad that when I see your dear eyes again tomorrow, I will be rid of even the faintest glimmer of cowardly hope. And I also believe that this knowledge will make my attitude easier. It is time to come to an end. For a year and a half, I have been torn between deceptive hopes and resignation to my fate. In the long run, this uncertainty might destroy my nerves. Now fate has finally spoken, now it's time to march.
The song of my life still sounds, and a sound goes around like a mallet jumping over a calfskin, terum tum tum terum.
How Irmelein loved to read this aloud when we remembered the many friends who were swallowed up by the first war, which spared you and me, only to burden these strong shoulders with something quite different from a quick and beautiful soldier's death. Do not despair that even your last fight was in vain; it too will bear fruit, that you, as my wife and my fearless comrade, fought to the last and utmost against political injustice against your husband. No one could have done more than you and my friends did.
Meanwhile, it was bath time, and it seemed almost funny to me, and yet I took it as seriously as if my wedding were tomorrow. It was a pleasure to feel the hot water on my skin, and I sometimes had to

give myself an inner jolt not to skimp on the soap this time, as I usually had to. The laundry is also to be picked up, and I hope it will still find its way to you. All this would be so insignificant if you couldn't use it to help others in their general need. And I will think of that on my last journey, leaving behind everything I don't need to die. Perhaps
tomorrow will be the last day to write to you, and so everyone else, to whom I would so much like to reply to their final greetings, must take a back seat. You must tell them all this later, in time, so that they know how much joy they have given me. I continue to keep my notes every day.
What you write about those who have been acquitted is such that I no longer want to trade places with them. Perhaps it is the greatest happiness for me and you, guided by your dear tender hand, to be allowed to die now, after I have done everything that remained for me to do. The comforting thought will be that I am now free, as free as a person can be, no more cells and no more guards, and I can always be with you, and every evening when the bells ring, you will feel it, but you must not turn around. I will think of all this when I sit before you tomorrow, but I cannot say it...
October 12, 1946, 9:45 a.m. – the day and hour of our last meeting. The main entrance to the Palace of Justice was blocked, and I was instructed to use a gate at the rear entrance. Father Sixtus was waiting for me in room 57 – 60 minutes.
I sit down in front of the barred window, then I dare to raise my head. What a weakling I was, I should have known. In this face, everything has already been overcome.
"I envy you," I hear myself say, and it comes from deep inside me.
Now he leans forward, so that the arm of the guard to whom he is tied is pulled forward with him. Right behind the glass pane in the middle of the barred window are now bright, clear eyes.
"I fear that one day Germany will be overrun by the East," I hear him say, and I see tears, "if Germany's spirit remains as strong and pure as that of Hellas, then it will endure." Now his eyes are clear again and almost cheerful. "I would like to dictate a few more words to you, following on from what I asked Mrs. Jahrreiss to write."
I hurriedly rummage through my bag for a piece of paper and take down in shorthand the words that seem important to him for his study: "Hitler's influence on the conduct of the war.":64
"He should have fallen in battle instead of choosing to flee to his death, they say. He wanted to and would have done so if he had still been physically capable. So he did not choose
the easier death, but the certain one. He acted as all heroes in history have acted and always will act. He allowed himself to be buried in the ruins of his empire and his hopes. Let those who wish to condemn him for this do so. I cannot."
I look at him and understand the defiant mood that prompts him to say these words, as Professor Percy Schramm later confirmed to me.
Thirty minutes left. Too long and too short to give thanks, every word spoken and unspoken is understood, and the power of his gaze carries me away from fear and horror.
Like a quiet blessing, I feel Father Sixtus's hand on my hair. "It's time," he whispers. I stand up and step back. With dignity beyond comprehension, the condemned man bows. A quick turn, and his footsteps fade away.
The prisoner wrote:
"These hours on October 12, from ten to twelve, shall always remain the most sacred hours of your life... Thus, this hour has finally detached me from all earthly joys and bound me eternally to you. You will not sneak fearfully through the alleys like the wife of a criminal, but will stand tall and proud everywhere as the wife of a German officer who gave his life for his country and his comrades. But if, as I hope with every fiber of my being, you one day experience the dawn of a true German spring, then you shall greet this Germany on my behalf, for that alone I have lived and died . . .
And once again, my evening greetings. It is late, and I am exhausted. The bright October sun shone into my cell once more at noon today, and as I lay on my bed, I rejoiced in the red of life that it conjured up between the closed fingers of my hand. It is good and beautiful to have been only a child, a young man,

and a man. I am spared the agony of dying. And my last memory of the freedom and beauty of life is transfigured by the blissful joy of our happiness. Good night, may your wounded heart find some peace . . ."

And he wrote: "Sunday morning, October 13, 1946. Half an hour ago, I woke up from a deep sleep after repeated calls for my drinking cup. For my shame, I must say that yesterday I took a sleeping pill, and with it

I fell asleep while reading Hamsun's Wanderer and drifted off into the dreamland of unreality. Now I am sitting on the lower edge of the bed, drinking my coffee and dreaming of you and listening to the bells.

It occurs to me that you will not receive this letter until Tuesday and that there will be more letters when I am no longer on this earth. But I do not want any more letters from you, because I can no longer read them, and that hurts me. From this moment on, I read everything in your soul, your suffering and your joy at my freedom and my peace. How much I have read about the last days and hours of people facing certain death. But like everything in life, you can only fully understand what has become your own experience, and to then put it into words that make even the living shudder at the supernatural splendor of this holy hour, you would have to be a poet. But I am not a poet, only a soldier. Your love, however, will recognize and feel everything that I cannot put into words, and with me comprehend the paradox that I can say goodbye to you with a feeling of liberation and redemption despite all the relapses that every spring brings, over which the departing winter once again hurls its sparkling ice crystals. I hear the organ, and my longing spreads its wings once more toward you."

And on the same evening, he wrote:

"It may comfort you to know that many more loving words that I have written for you are waiting for you in the cell. Today at 1 p.m., the colonel and his entourage came into the cell. I closed my collar and stood with my hands behind my back against the wall under the window. He briefly informed me that the Control Council had rejected the applications. I nodded my head. He did too, then I said, 'This decision is also an honor for me.'

In the afternoon, Father Sixtus was there and told me that he had seen you, and we smoked a cigarette in peace. I still have to report that Sunday was quiet and peaceful, that I slept by the open window after lunch, then spent a long time looking at pictures from a past time of happiness.

I didn't read your letters until after dinner, when I was sure that no one would come and disturb my sacred devotion. I heard everything we hadn't said. I was so sorry

that we weren't done with the handcuffs when you came. The post was still on the wrong side and had to be moved to the right. I had deliberately put on gloves, as I always do when walking in the hall. I owe it to that hour on Saturday that I already feel completely free today.

It always gave me a pang when you spoke of years of separation. You know I wanted to be free or dead, and it was perhaps the most difficult decision I ever made when I gave the professors free rein to do whatever they thought was right for you after the verdict. I believed I had to make this sacrifice of love for you and not rob you of your last hopes by force.

But I know for sure that not a year will pass before you will remember only happy memories of my regained freedom."

And he wrote:

"Monday evening, October 14, 1946. Love never ends. Tonight, I am shaken to the very foundations of my heart. There was such an abundance of love in the many letters I received that my overflowing heart can hardly contain it all. My cell seemed like a spring garden, shining and flooding, sprouting and greening like paradise. And that is everything for me, who am supposed to be ostracized and abandoned by everything that is beautiful and good in life. How can I thank you and all my loved ones? One thing must come first:

I want to thank those whose help alone brought these words of love to me so quickly. I have always been fair and recognized goodness wherever I found it. So I am grateful for the dignified tranquility in

prison, for the seriousness and friendliness of the guards, for the warmth and good food, for the loyal helpfulness of the German staff, for the dear old doctor, for the tenderness and helpfulness of the censors. How else would it be possible for me to receive so much mail, which was only delivered this morning? It is not as Hagen sings: "Love is a lie, and only hate is real." No, I see it every day now. Hate has struck me down, but love carries me to the stars. I received the verses from Lenau—there you also write of the quiet ones in the land. They are the ones who matter. I have already written the verses by Raabe:

"The eternal is silently loud, the past silently passes, God's will prevails over earthly strife."

And I remember the ending of a book whose title I have forgotten: "But the powerful stride through time and carry a heavy burden. The earth trembles beneath their footsteps as they pass, and before their will the world is transformed, walls sink and rocky mountains split. But the humble guard patiently and silently through storm and weather the sacred fires of humanity, which bloom from the primordial source of eternal love.' That is the world and the task of women. Men have struggle, glory, and death; they have the easier task, but the task of women is suffering. And that is also why I have always loved and revered women so much, because they are closest to the earth. And now to your letter from noon today. Oh, it did me good and felt so right that everything in you rebelled once again against the injustice of this world. I could use all of that for the final hour, which will be captured by the lenses of reporters and cameras. They should not expect resignation to fate or indifference to death or even joy at it; no, they should also register pride and contempt. I was so proud of you after this letter. I know you will make the grave on the island mine. You still have a big and difficult task for me. It is already late, and soon the lights will go out. When my friends are around you in the evening after my death, it should be like a funeral parade."

And he wrote his very last letter:

"Our farewell should not resemble a rockslide, but should fade away like a beautiful conversation between two people or the last notes of an orchestra. Father Sixtus will tell you about our last conversation, and it is fitting that the bells are ringing for it. I want to die just as I have lived. I know I have made mistakes, but if there is a God in heaven, as I understand him, then he will forgive me, and I can stand before him with clear eyes. My prayer tomorrow will be that God may protect and bless you, my loved ones, my people, and my homeland. And so I say to you in conclusion: You shall live and overcome your suffering, you shall spread love around you and help those in need. You shall no longer make me more than I was and ever wanted to be. You shall believe and confess that I worked and fought for Germany and not for its politicians.

Oh, I could go on writing like this forever, but I can already hear the familiar infantry tattoo and the old, well-known song. Can you hear it, my dear? "Soldiers should go home."

Tonight—can I do nothing to stop the terrible thing? No, I am powerless. Tanks, sentries, walls. You can't stop the machine! Should I end my life in protest against injustice and revenge? Can I do it without the flame of strength that is dying out today, or does duty call me to live on to fight for his name?

Tonight. The wall on my forehead is wet and cold, I hear the sentry patrolling back and forth. God, where are you? Are you a distant, angry God who knows no mercy, or a close, loving God who wants death so that others may be freed through sacrifice?

Tonight. Dead silence and darkness lie over the ruins at the market. Do I not hear footsteps behind me, and do I not see a scaffold, a gallows, in front of me? It is horror that haunts me, and the gallows a burnt-out facade.

Tonight... In St. Lorenz, it is as cold as in a tomb. The clock strikes every quarter hour with a booming sound.

"Had your law not been my comfort, I would have perished in my misery."

In the early morning of October 16, 1946, around 2 a.m., Colonel General Alfred Jodl, Chief of the Wehrmacht Command Staff in the High Command of the Wehrmacht, was executed by hanging. His last words were:
"I salute you, oh my Germany."